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TALENT SHOW
SUBMARINE HUNTING OFF OMAN

SHORE FIRE

A Royal Marine of Lima Company, 42 Commando, throws himself on Blue Beach at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina during amphibious drills as the Auriga deployment approaches its climax. See pages 21-23 for reports.

Picture: PO(Phot) Dave Husbands, 3 Commando Brigade

GLOBAL REACH



Fleet Focus

IT'S not often that there's a concentration of Royal Navy assets that's longer than the sizeable forces mustered in either the Gulf or Afghanistan.

But this month it's quite clear where you're most likely to bump into Jack, Jenny or Royal: the eastern seaboard of the USA on the Auriga 2010 deployment.

It's fallen to the nation's flagship, **HMS Ark Royal** to lead the force in her 25th birthday year – she celebrated that impressive anniversary in style off Nova Scotia (*see right*).

When not forming a giant 25 on the flight deck, the ship's company have been heading the carrier strike element – Ark, **Sutherland**, **Liverpool** and **RFA Fort George** – of Auriga (*see pages 22-23*), while **HMS Albion** has been in charge of the amphibious element – completed by **3 Cdo Bde**, **HMS Ocean** and **RFA Largs Bay** (*see page 21*). There's also a fair smattering of Fleet Air Arm units – (deep breath) elements of **814**, **815**, **829**, **845**, **846**, **847** and **849 NAS**.

Before teaming up with the amphibious force, the carrier group could be found in Halifax, Nova Scotia, for the 100th anniversary of the Canadian Navy (*see the centre pages*).

And HMS Sutherland was letting fly with a dummy torpedo during anti-submarine exercises (*see opposite*).

Also on this side of the Atlantic, **HMS Manchester** bagged some £1.5m cannabis thanks to the alertness of her **815 NAS** aircrew (*see page 4*).

In the South Atlantic, **HMS Portland** is enjoying (we use the term loosely) FIXmas – a Falklands Christmas, celebrated in June (*see page 20*).

To Afghanistan now, where the men of **40 Commando** continue to make sacrifices (*see page 7*) in their efforts to support the people of Helmand (*see page 8*).

In the Gulf, **HMS St Albans** has handed over Telic duties to her sister **HMS Somerset**; before leaving Bahrain, the Saint conducted a rare exercise with minehunters **Chiddingfold** and **Middleton** (*see pages 6 and 9*).

Submarine **HMS Talent** took part in anti-submarine exercises with **820 NAS** and **HMS Northumberland** in the Gulf of Oman (*see page 5*). The latter temporarily broke off her anti-piracy mission to resume her traditional role of sub hunter (*see page 16*).

You'll be pleased to know that Talent did not require the support of the **Submarine Parachute Assistance Group**, or SPAG, who practised a boat rescue in Gibraltar (*see page 16*).

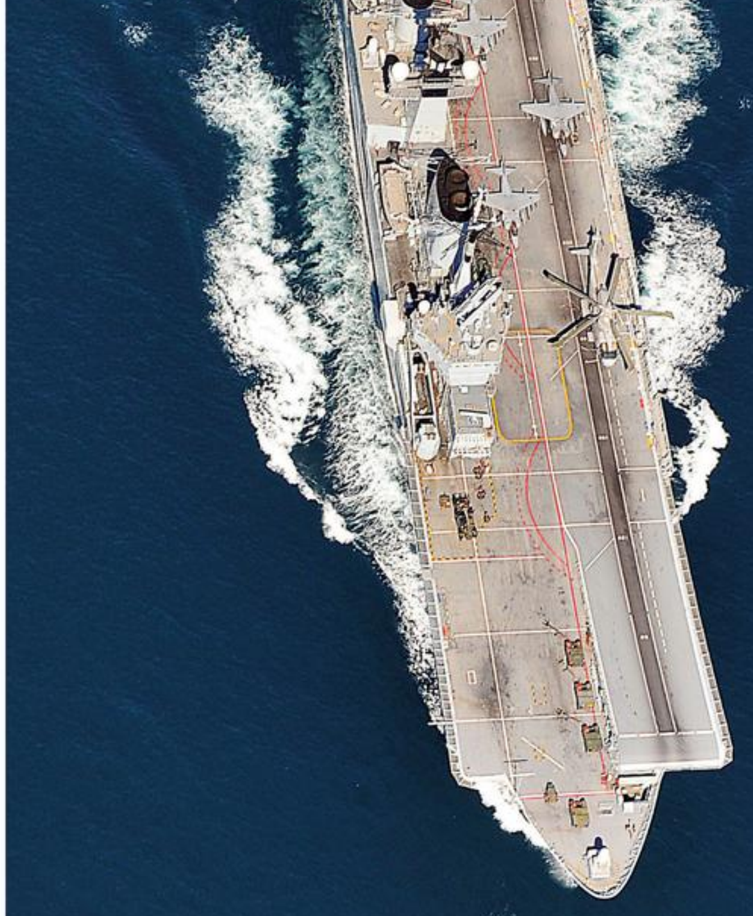
One boat which is in need of help is **HMS Alliance**; a £6m appeal has been launched to restore the veteran submarine which is on display at the RN Submarine Museum in Gosport (*see page 38*).

HMS Kent headed to Sweden to foster links between Scandinavia and the UK (*see page 10*) before returning to Britain for national Armed Forces Day celebrations in Cardiff (*see page 13*).

Before Kent's appearance in the Welsh capital, survey ship **HMS Scott** visited to take part in centennial commemorations of Capt Scott's departure for Antarctica (*see page 11*).

With it being high summer in Blighty (you can tell because there are loads of repeats on the telly...) the University Squadrons are deploying with their students. **HMS Raider** and **Tracker** made a mammoth journey to Gibraltar (a month-long round trip), **HMS Archer** travelled a few yards... but she did have the First Sea Lord onboard (*see page 4*).

And finally, however good (or bad) the words, the pages of *Navy News* are nothing without the award-winning imagery of the RN Photographic Branch, which has held its annual **Peregrine Trophy** recognising the best lensmen and women (*see pages 14-15*).



Ark marks milestone

TWENTY-five years to the day HMS Ark Royal made her inaugural entrance to Portsmouth, Britain's flagship marked the birthday on the other side of the Atlantic.

While Ark's maiden entry to her home port was greeted with a fanfare, large crowds, and a rendition of *Sailing* by a Royal Marines Band, her 25th birthday was witnessed by two Lynx fliers and a photographer.

In clear skies off the Canadian coast, the trio helped choreograph hundreds of the ship's company who formed a giant '25' on the aft of the carrier's flight deck.

Back in July 1985, the carrier's arrival in Portsmouth was hailed by the media as best of British and all that.

Ark's builder, Swan Hunter, delivered the then £320m ship four and a half months early; there had even been a team of 15 cleaners aboard with buckets and mops to ensure the carrier was ready.

Her main armament came courtesy of Sea Kings and Harriers, her principal foe the Soviet Navy, who sent a ship to monitor Ark's journey from Newcastle to Portsmouth.

And a quarter of a century later? Swan Hunter no longer build warships. The Soviet Empire has crumbled. And, er, Ark's deck is filled with Sea Kings and Harriers...

... just not the same ones. These days it's Harrier GR9s and Airborne Surveillance and Control Sea Kings. They've been joined on the carrier by Merlins, a twinkle in the Admiralty's eye back in 1985.

Among those witnessing today's crew forming up for the huge 25 was Rocky Salmon, who served aboard the carrier in the early days as a young sub lieutenant on his first ship. A quarter of a century on, he's her 'wings' – Commander Air.

"I had a brilliant time on my first deployment – and I'm having a brilliant time on my last," said Cdr Salmon.

"The technology has moved on, of course, and things change, but not the people. The feeling on the ship is exactly the same. It's still that feeling of a whole team effort."

The 25th birthday came at the end of a hectic seven days for Britain's flagship, which is leading the four-month Auriga task force deployment to Canada and USA.

Ark played host to British premier David Cameron in Halifax, followed by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, then took part in the International Fleet Review to mark the centennial of the Royal Canadian Navy where the carrier was among 30 vessels reviewed by the Queen (*see pages 21-25*).

"All in all, a pretty standard week in the life of Ark Royal," joked her Commanding Officer Capt John Clink.

"But there is also something special about this ship. Ark Royal is a very famous name, perhaps the most famous warship in the world.

"The men and women on board knuckle down at every turn, they show amazing resilience and enthusiasm."

Ark's celebrations will conclude in the autumn with 25th anniversary commemorations of the carrier's formal commissioning.

Picture: LA(Phot) Gregg Macready, HMS Ark Royal

Just a drop in the ocean...



A SIGHT to strike fear into the heart of any enemy submariner – a Merlin launching an attack on her prey.

Sadly, though, the world-leading helicopter has not suddenly been blessed with a capacious bomb-bay or weapon racks as wide as her rotor span.

This is a digitally-enhanced aggregated photograph, taken by the ship's Executive Warrant Officer, WO1 Anthony Starbuck, of HMS Sutherland's aircraft launching a single training variant torpedo, with the EWO rapidly reeling off a series of images as the weapon arcs down into the Atlantic.

The weapon drop, designed to simulate a Stingray torpedo attack, was part of Exercise Halcyon Rendezvous, a small element of the overarching Auriga deployment led by flagship HMS Ark Royal.

Supporting the Fleet in operations around the world, 829 Naval Air Squadron dispatched 01 Flight to join HMS Sutherland and the Carrier Strike Group in the spring for the Auriga deployment, in order to take part in large-scale multi-national task group exercises.

Leaving Devonport in April, Sutherland initially sailed to Scotland to take part in the Joint Warrior exercise, helping Sutherland and her Merlin – Taliska – build an understanding as they took on surface and underwater threats.

The frigate then met with the rest of the Auriga task group to cross the Atlantic, honing her submarine-killing skills by hunting down the French nuclear boat FS Perle and American attack submarine USS Dallas in a game of "cat and mouse", tracking both submarines on advanced sonar systems and carrying out multiple simulated attacks.

Once across the ocean Sutherland and Taliska have been tested by fast inshore attack craft, submarines, aircraft and surface ships, while the Naval Flying Standards Flight and Aviation Assurance teams also paid a visit in order to test the embarked Merlin aircrew and ensure that standards have been upheld.

Both ship and Merlin flight have passed every test with flying colours.

Flight Commander Lt Cdr Hamish McKee is proud of his flight's integration with the ship, saying: "My team is ready to go – we've proved that we can operate with HMS Sutherland to the highest level and now we are ready to take on anything that is thrown at us."

During one of the exercises, the Merlin closed the enemy task group at low level under radar coverage and provided Sutherland with accurate targeting information for her Harpoon missiles, allowing the ship to successfully engage and 'destroy' the enemy – a daredevil raid which prompted one of the American ships to dub Taliska and her crew the 'Heroes of Auriga'.

Cdr John Payne, Commanding Officer of Sutherland, said: "I've been really impressed with the high reliability of the Merlin, and the support we've received from the task group has ensured that our aircraft is always available to the ship.

"The Merlin itself has really expanded our operational capability as a unit.

"With the aircraft's advanced sensors and weapons, we can track and attack the enemy from long range.

"The aircraft, in conjunction with the frigate's 2087 sonar, combine to create a first-class submarine hunting force."

As *Navy News* went to press, Sutherland was due to take part in the final stages of Auriga, involving large numbers of NATO units ranged along the entire east coast of the USA.

She has also taken part in the Canadian Navy centennial celebrations, joining the Royal Navy contingent during the International Fleet Review by the Queen.

⚓ More from Auriga – pages 21-25
⚓ Squadrons of the FAA – page 12

GLOBAL REACH

Ocean Royals save sailor

ROYAL Marines from HMS Ocean saved a fisherman – and his boat – as they exercised off the US coast.

The assault ship was taking part in exercises with the USS Kearsarge battlegroup as the Auriga deployment reached its climax off North Carolina.

The war games comprise strike operations from HMS Ark Royal and an amphibious element courtesy of Albion, Ocean and RFA Largs Bay.

The commandos from Ocean's 9 Assault Squadron were on patrol in one of the carrier's landing craft when they spied a fisherman waving his arms frantically.

"The boat was taking on a lot of water which had damaged his electrics," said Mne Chris Reid.

"The boat wasn't far from going under. We took the decision to tow him back to the marina.

"The fisherman was really pleased that we were able to help him as he'd been stuck there for almost three hours."

■ More from Auriga, pages 21-25

Dry summer for Daring

BRITAIN'S most advanced warship was sitting high on wooden blocks in Portsmouth Naval Base for several weeks as she underwent her first period in dry dock.

Four years after HMS Daring rushed down a slipway into the Clyde, the weather was rather warmer as Serco tugs helped Britain's first Type 45 destroyer into dry dock in Portsmouth for her first docking period.

Over the next six hours the dock was drained, while divers checked the position of the blocks on the dock bottom which would support the £1bn warship once the waters were gone.

There was quite a bit of maintenance to carry out on Daring, inside and out, especially after her exertions off the South Coast this spring which saw her undertake Operational Sea Training for the first time (she passed, you'll be pleased to know).

Once the work was complete, the dock was flooded up and Daring took her place next to her sister Dauntless in Portsmouth Naval Base for this year's Navy Days.

After summer leave, Daring's due to head to exercise areas off the USA to test her ability to work with the US Navy.

All aboard Montrose

HMS Montrose was 'toppers' for a day as she took friends and family to sea... 280 of them.

By our reckoning that brought the number of souls aboard the Devonport frigate to well over 450.

The ship took them for a spin around Plymouth Sound and the approaches to the great Devon port.

As the Type 23 passed the Citadel, she exchanged a ceremonial gun salute with the commando gunners of 29 Regiment RA – Montrose's affiliated Army unit.

Then it was on to the RN's South Coast exercise areas to interact with other Senior Service vessels (the latter not having quite so much fun as they were being tested by the Flag Officer Sea Training) and watch fly pasts from Hawks and Falcons.

The ship's company gave comprehensive tours and talks, Service family organisations explained the support they can offer, and younger visitors were kept entertained by face painters – despite fairly rough weather.

Montrose is at the end of a 12-month period of regeneration following a refit which will see her deploy imminently.



● *At the end of a 1,500-mile odyssey HMS Raider sails past the unmistakeable outline of The Rock*
Picture: Sgt Steve Lancaster RAF, BFHQ Gibraltar

The long and the short of it

THEY say of holidays that the journey's half the fun.

Or most of it in the case of Her Majesty's Ships Tracker and Raider.

The two patrol boats headed to Gibraltar for the climax of their summer deployment. Nothing special in that; it's a regular haunt for RN vessels.

Except that the two boats - which serve the universities of Oxford and Cambridge respectively – have a range of only 270 miles. The Rock is some 1,500 miles by the coastal route from Pompey.

And that led to port-hopping. A lot of port-hopping, taking in St Helier, Concarneau, La Rochelle, Santander, Gijón, La Corunna, Vigo, Porto, Nazaré, Lisbon and Portimão among others.

It took two weeks (and one crew change of students per boat) to get to the gateway to the Med. And there the two boats were shepherded into harbour by the Rock's constant protectors, the RN's Gibraltar Squadron.

It's the first time since 1997 that URNU boats have made the lengthy trip to Gibraltar (the last two were Biter and Charger, for the record).

Tracker and Raider arrived in Gib just in time for the officers' mess summer ball.

The following day there was "the full Gibraltar package" in the words of Tracker's Commanding Officer Lt Conor O'Neill: an encounter with the apes on the top of the Rock and an obligatory trip to the Donkey's Flip-Flop (aka The Horseshoe), which has added Raider and Tracker tallies to its already impressive collection.

The boats were visited by the senior naval officer in Gibraltar, Cdre Adrian Bell, then, after just two nights at the Rock, it was time to complete the 3,000-mile round trip.

"It's a major planning challenge and a test of endurance for the students," explained Lt O'Neill.

"Getting down here safely is testament to the hard work of our four-man permanent ship's company. They have worked very hard to give the students the chance of a lifetime."

P2000s are not renowned for their seakeeping (they don't go out in anything above a Sea State 4), so how blessed the Oxbridge duo were when they crossed a benign Biscay.

"We've had a whale of a time on this trip but it has also been really good training – especially on the night passages," said Kieran Tamayo, who's reading history at Trinity College, Oxford.

And from very long journeys for P2000s... to very short ones (about 750 yards by our reckoning).

Aberdeen's university boat HMS Archer took part in 70th anniversary commemorations of General de Gaulle's appeal to fellow Frenchmen to continue the struggle against the Nazis.

Flying the Efficiency Award flag – for the most efficient P2000 in the Fleet – and the standard of First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, the URNU boat carried Britain's most senior sailor and his French counterpart Amiral Pierre Forissier from HMS President, London's RNR unit, to HMS Belfast on the other side of Tower Bridge.

Despite the small size of a P2000, they can only pass beneath the capital's landmark crossing at low tide without the need for the bascules to be raised.

And it wasn't low tide when Archer made her short journey (*pictured below by PO(Phot) Amanda Reynolds leaving HMS President*).

"With so many high-profile French dignitaries and veterans coming over for ceremonies, this was a really nice finishing touch to proceedings," said Archer's Commanding Officer Lt Michael Hutchinson.

His ship was in London on the opening stages of her summer deployment around the South Coast, Channel Islands, Normandy and Brittany.

■ We'll have a feature on the URNUs in next month's edition





● *Thumbs up from Lt Luke Edwards, HMS Manchester's Flight Pilot, and a cargo of £1.5m cannabis*

Pot luck for Manchester

DRUGS worth an estimated £1.5m won't see these shores courtesy of the men and women of HMS Manchester who intercepted a shipment in the Caribbean.

A dozen bales of cannabis were seized by the destroyer's 815 NAS Lynx after it spotted a speedboat racing through the water off the island of Montserrat.

The helicopter had been flying the Type 42's CO Cdr Rex Cox ashore to meet island officials on the latest stage of Manchester's deployment.

As they headed for Montserrat, the Lynx crew noticed the speedboat; aside from its two main engines, it carried two spare engines – classic drug-running tactics.

While Royal Montserrat Police intercepted the go-fast, the Lynx scoured the area and soon came across a dozen 25kg bales of cannabis on a beach.

They were promptly handed over to local police, who also arrested the speedboat's five crew; the latter, all from St Vincent and the Grenadines, were subsequently charged with drug trafficking offences.

Manchester had been visiting the British overseas territory to discuss disaster relief plans with civic leaders and emergency services.

Aside from the perennial threat of hurricanes, islanders live under constant fear thanks to the rarely inactive Soufrière Hills volcano.

Eruptions in the mid-90s prompted the evacuation of much of the island, including the capital Plymouth, and a major aid effort by the UK.

Among those who helped back then were Manchester's CPO Craig Sullivan, serving with the Busy Bee's older sister HMS Southampton at the time.

In July 1995, the then 22-year-old AB(Missileman) and shipmates provided vital relief to the people of Montserrat.

Southampton's sailors worked around the clock to erect marquees, providing makeshift accommodation for islanders.

The Type 42 subsequently helped to evacuate inhabitants to Antigua. Many have never returned – as the now senior rate discovered.

"There've been efforts to rebuild parts of the island but because of what happened, a lot of what used to be there just isn't anymore.

"The island is a completely different world to how it used to be. There are people living in very difficult conditions and it is really sad to see."

The chief petty officer continued: "In all honesty, I have had a mixture of emotions since coming back here.

"I remember the desperation on the faces of some of the people that were living on the island.

"I don't think they understood why we were helping but they were pleased we were there."

The senior rate's current ship has spent the summer of 2010 island hopping around the Caribbean, spreading the word on how the RN – and Manchester herself in particular – can offer support and aid to communities should a hurricane strike.

To that end, apart from Montserrat, the destroyer has visited Anguilla and Martinique (which knows a thing or two itself about terrible volcanic eruptions).

A century on, volcano Mont Pelée is largely at peace, so the Mancunians focused their efforts on discussions about counter-narcotics work with security forces in the French dependency.

The destroyer's 1st XI football team notched up a comfortable victory against a local team, but not so the rugby side which went down narrowly.

International rescue in Guzz

LAST year it was pirates. This year communications and disaster relief were on the agenda as warships from France, Russia, UK and US gathered in Devonport.

The annual FRUKUS exercise (the acronym comes from the participating nations) traces its history back to the dying days of the Cold War and attempts to foster closer understanding among the respective navies, with participants taking it in turns to host the gathering.

In 2010 it fell to the RN – and the staff of FOST – to host the exercises with HMS Kent flying the flag for Britain alongside command ship USS Mount Whitney, Russian destroyer RFS Severomorsk, and France's FS Primauguet, an anti-submarine frigate.

They spent a week working together, culminating in a disaster exercise at the Royal Navy's specialist training site at Bull Point.

"The specific objectives this year focused on operating together as a task group and the sharing of information – not easy given the different methods, language, culture and equipment which the nations use," explained Flag Officer Sea Training, Rear Admiral Chris Snow.

FRUKUS heads across the Pond in 2011.



15 minutes of fame for Talent

DON'T worry, our printer's not gone all Andy Warhol on you.

The strange duotones on this page come courtesy of the 'periphot' (periscope photographer) aboard HMS Talent who's been rather busy.

Above is the distinctive sight of a Type 23 frigate, a Merlin parked on her flight deck.

The F238 tells you it's Her Majesty's Ship Northumberland...

... and the cross hairs tell you she's in the sights of Talent as hunter and hunted play a game of cat and mouse in the Gulf of Oman.

After a brief stand down period in the United Arab Emirates, Talent resumed her East of Suez deployment with nine days of anti-submarine exercises in the Gulf of Oman.

First up, Merlins from 820 NAS and American P3-C Orion maritime patrol aircraft (*seen through the periscope, below*) based in the region.

Out here, both are more usually used for anti-piracy/smuggling operations…

… but they reverted to type to 'play' with Talent.

After three days of being chased by air power, HMS Northumberland weighed in.

She too broke off from maritime security duties (*see page 16*), throwing her 829 NAS Merlin into the mix, plus Sonar 2087 – a submarine's nemesis.

While all this faffing around was going on above, Talent used her array of sensors and natural stealth to try to avoid detection, gather intelligence and strike back (her attacks were marked by the launching of customary green grenades).

And with that all done, the hunted turned hunter and carried out some training of her own.

Firstly, an underwater look in which Talent passed only a few feet under the keel of the frigate to take photos (*above right*) and practise gathering intelligence on a ship's underwater fittings.

Talent's watch leaders also got to conduct 'eyes only' training with Northumberland, something normally reserved for Perisher students.

For the uninitiated, that means using periscope and stopwatches (as many as four at a time) to work out a target's bearing, range, course and speed… with the target charging down on you.

"It is really important that warfare officers are able to use the periscope and mental arithmetic to keep the submarine safe at periscope depth while high-speed warships are operating very close to the submarine," explained Talent's CO Cdr Simon Asquith.

Having completed one run, Tactics and Sonar Officer Lt Cdr John Rider said. "It was a great opportunity to conduct this training at sea. It really focuses the mind to have a 5,000-ton warship charging you at 26kts."

I should coco…

During the exercise, both Talent and Northumberland's teams took up the chance to 'cross-pol' (ie trade places), which proved immensely popular for the lucky few.

During the visits, the deeps took the opportunity to dive into a well-earned shower, ring home and visit the frigate's ops room, whilst their general service counterparts were treated to a day in the life of a submariner, with several sailors conducting simulated torpedo attacks on their own ship or trying their hand at surfacing the boat.

Having completed training with our own forces, Talent then carried out a highly- successful Submarine Tactical Exercise against a modern – and very capable – US Los Angeles-class fleet boat.

The scenario – right out of a Tom Clancy novel – pitched the two submarines against one another; furiously trying to outmanoeuvre each other in the deep, they tried to gain tactical advantage over the other and deliver the killer blow with a heavyweight torpedo.

Sounds like fun.

"It has been a great opportunity for Talent to hone her war-fighting skills and for our general service, Fleet Air Arm and US allies to practise quality anti-submarine training against a capable boat," said Cdr Asquith.

"The cross-pol was a real highlight. It is always great to be able to show off the boat and dispel (at least some) of the submarine myths."

Before embarking on the anti-submarine exercise, Talent played host to an airman.

Crabs and deeps aren't typical bedfellows, so Commander Joint Operations Air Marshal Stuart Peach was keen to learn more about Talent and her men.

The boat falls within the Northwood-based senior officer's area of operations; he was on a fact-finding flying visit (pun intended) to military units in the Middle East.

The air marshal was shown around Talent by her CO and showed particular interest in her Tomahawk cruise missiles, which can (and have in the past) delivered precision munitions on to a target over 1,000 miles away from a boat, and the submarine's communications fit which enables her to fight effectively either alone or as part of a task force.

In addition, Air Marshal Peach was shown Sonar 2076, which is one of the most advanced submarine sonar systems fitted to any boat in the world.

Before leaving, Air Marshall Peach thanked Cdr Asquith for a very informative visit, commenting on the professionalism and positive attitude of Talent's ship's company.

As for the boat, she'll remain on patrol for a while yet; she's not due to return home to Devonport until early autumn.









Naval nurses honoured

THE Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire, Sir James Hawley, steps back to admire the new Naval memorial he has helped to unveil at the National Memorial Arboretum near Alrewas.

This fine blue pearl granite tablet and attendant curved benches stand as a memorial to the Queen Alexandra's Royal Navy Nursing Service – QARNNS in everyday Naval parlance – dedicated by naval nurses of today and yesteryear

The oldest of the latter present was 90-year-old Mary 'Paddy' Jackson, who joined the Service in 1944.

In 1946 she was sent to Hong Kong and sailed with SS Empire Clyde to collect injured and sick PoWs from mainland Japan.

Six decades later she joined the Navy's Medical Director General Surg Rear Admiral Lionel Jarvis and the Royal Navy's head of nursing, Capt Helen Allkins, and others at the unveiling ceremony.

There has been a joint memorial plot for the Women's Royal Naval Service, QARNNS and the Voluntary Aid Detachment at the Staffordshire arboretum for more than a decade.

But given that almost half the QARNNS are now male, it was decided the Service should have a bespoke memorial plot.

After a ten-month fundraising campaign there were sufficient funds to erect the monument, which was designed by a committee under the late Capt Claire Taylor.

The new monument will be completed in the autumn with the planting of two rowan trees – selected because they're regarded as 'healing trees' – on either side of the tablet.

"The dedication of the QARNNS memorial is a fitting tribute to all those who have served and continue to serve the nursing branch of the Royal Navy," said Capt Allkins.

"We are very proud of each and every one and are delighted that we now have a lasting tribute to them."

PO(NN) Scott Gilbert – a veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan – added: "At present QARNNS is incredibly busy on operations and is being utilised more than ever, so days like this, when we can stop to remember our colleagues past and present, are vitally important and very humbling.

"There could be no better setting for our memorial dedication service than the National Memorial Arboretum and it is an honour to be here."

The nursing arm of the RN traces its heritage back to the Crimean War.

Its current name was introduced in 1902 when Queen Alexandra agreed to become President of the Nursing Staff. More than a century later, her great-granddaughter Princess Alexandra is the service's patron.

Picture: LA(Phot) Keith Morgan, RN Photographer of the Year

Prints of thieves

SADLY we've run out of space for our article on Naval crime scene investigators as advertised last month; we hope to feature it in our September issues.



The tale of Midd, Chid and the Saint

CRASHING through the waves, here's proof that the waters of the Gulf aren't always benign.

HMS St Albans' RN and Royal Marines boarding team head away from their mother ship to conduct a training exercise as the emphasis of their deployment shifts.

For the past five or so months, the Portsmouth-based frigate has been protecting Iraq's oil platforms and providing maritime security. But with that task now handed to the Saint's sister Somerset (*see page 9*), the frigate's focusing on anti-piracy/anti-smuggling/anti-terrorism in the Gulf of Aden and Arabian Sea as she begins the long journey back to the Solent.

Before leaving the northern Gulf behind for good, there was a chance for a 'family reunion': three warships of the Portsmouth Flotilla working together.

St Albans spent a day in company with Hunt-class minehunters HMS Chiddingfold (veteran of these waters) and HMS Middleton (a newcomer) conducting exercises akin to a Thursday War off Plymouth.

Although all RN ships use Bahrain as their hub in the Gulf, exercises between them aren't that commonplace.

Generally speaking, frigates and destroyers dispatched to the Gulf do their thing (protecting those platforms)…

… and the four-strong mine warfare force (two Sandowns, Grimsby and Pembroke, are also based in Bahrain) does its thing (keeping the region's sea lanes mine-free).

The day's exercises began with moving through a mock minefield (with the Hunts taking the lead) then an air attack (time for St Albans and her Seawolf to take charge) with the threat provided by the frigate's Merlin 'Lola'.

From villain to hero as the helicopter conducted winching drills from both smaller ships, before the exercise closed with a self-defence serial as the three ships' sea boats pretended to be fast attack craft and went pell-mell to inflict damage on their mother ships.

"In the event of any hostilities, minehunters are usually first in and last out – but they can only operate under the protective umbrella of a destroyer or frigate," explained Lt Cdr Richard Goldstone, CO of Middleton (*which is pictured below leading her sister*).

"It was great to work with St Albans. I believe we achieved our aim of increasing our knowledge of each other's strengths and capabilities. The men of the Mighty Midd look forward to future opportunities to show what they can offer."

Chid's CO Lt Cdr Jim Byron added: "In the small ship world it's not often that we have the chance to manoeuvre and exercise with our larger sisters.

"Of course, this works in reverse, and I'm sure that this was as good an opportunity for St Albans to work with the mine counter-measures community."

It was indeed, according to her CO Cdr Adrian Pierce.

"It's essential that we seize every opportunity like this," he added. "It's also a welcome sight to have some of our base port ships to assist us. Such exercises are greatly beneficial to everyone."

Back in Bahrain, the Saint formally handed over Operation Telic duties to her sister HMS Somerset.

On this final visit to the kingdom, there was a chance to grapple with local netball, football and rugby sides (draw-defeat-defeat respectively for the sailors) and a chance to relax courtesy of a Combined Services Entertainment Show.

The latter was hosted at the impressive US Fifth Fleet base in Bahrain, where the backdrop to the stage used by the dancers and comedians was a series of images charting St Albans' deployment so far.

Pictures: LA(Phot) Steve Johncock



Argus takes care of it

FRESH out of her three-year refit, RFA Argus is back in business providing the Fleet's unique floating hospital.

More than 180 medical staff joined the ship off the south coast for her first major exercise since the £137m safety conversion and refit which upgraded her medical facilities almost to the standard of an NHS district hospital.

The ten-day Exercise Medical Endeavour was designed to test the ship's ability to cope with casualties, and to assess her equipment against national healthcare standards.

It also refreshed the skills of the medical team, because although many have worked on Argus before, working at sea brings unique challenges.

Most of the medical team, both regulars and reservists, are drawn from the MOD's units embedded in NHS hospitals in Plymouth, Portsmouth, and Birmingham.

Cdr Ian Phillips, Commanding Officer of the Primary Casualty Receiving Facility, said: "We aim to deliver outcomes of treatment which equate to the best, and offer the highest level of care to deployed personnel."

He added: "Argus is a unique ship which delivers deployed hospital care to members of the Armed Forces from the sea."

Argus's principal role was formerly as aviation training ship, working with the Fleet Air Arm, but since her refit, her main task is Primary Casualty Receiving Ship.

Although she can't be classed a 'hospital ship' (the rules are defined by the Geneva Convention and would put severe restraints on how she could operate) she has a 100-bed hospital with a four-bay operating theatre, a ten-bed Intensive Care Unit, two general wards and the full gamut of clinical support services.

The safety conversion and refit included a new ramp to transport patients from the flight deck to the assessment area.

She also has an upgraded CT scanner, a state-of-the-art oxygen concentrator, and new digital imaging and laboratory investigation kit.

Wolves and Westminster

THAT would be HMS Westminster, of course, and the wolves in question are prefixed by the word 'sea'.

The Type 23 frigate is in the middle of regeneration after a £13m revamp in Devonport.

Among the upgrades she received was the latest variant of the Seawolf system.

And the new system needed testing, so off to the South Coast Exercise Areas.

Aside from the typical gathering of goofers on the bridge to watch Seawolf take down towed targets off the Dorset coast, the trials were observed by the person for whom the ship is named: the Duke of Westminster, Major General Gerald Cavendish Grosvenor.

The streaming target came directly at the ship on multiple passes to test the tracking system before a final firing run.

To test the efficacy of the Seawolf upgrade, the forward tracker was used on the opening day of the trials, the aft one on day two.

Also aboard the 'capital ship' off Dorset were 150 affiliates including officials from the City of Westminster, Met Police, London Underground, cadets and the Worshipful Company of Fanmakers to name but a few.

The third day of showing off Westminster saw the most important guests of all aboard: 250 family members.

They were treated to demonstrations by the ship's sea boat and Merlin; after the latter departed for HMS Sultan to help train rookie air engineers, the hangar hosted a hog roast.

‘These men are exceptional’

IT HAS been another month of bitter sacrifice for the men of 40 Commando in their efforts to bring peace to Helmand – and one district in particular, Sangin.

Mne Paul Warren was wounded in an explosion when Patrol Base Airport Lounge on the outskirts of Sangin was attacked by insurgents. Despite receiving immediate first aid from his comrades, the injuries the 23-year-old from Leyland sustained proved to be fatal.

A Royal for four years, Mne Warren was on his second tour of duty in Helmand.

He was, said Charlie Company commander Maj Ed Moorhouse, “something special”.

He continued: “That is an accolade I use sparingly in the close-knit band of brothers that we are, where all excel in doing their duty.

“It describes a man who volunteered and acted as point man for every patrol which his section undertook in Sangin; in my eyes these men, ‘on point’, are the bravest of the brave.”

Section commander Cpl Simon Schofield added that Mne Warren was “the most ‘switched-on’ guy I have ever met”.

He said: “Paul was a true fighter in every sense of the word, always keen to lead if there was a scrap. An immensely brave man, a quality he proved on countless occasions as point man in Sangin.

“He leaves behind a massive hole, but I know he would want us to go on and continue to take the fight to the enemy.”

L/Cpl Michael Taylor was also killed in Sangin during a fire-fight with insurgents.

The father of three from Rhyl died manning one of the sangar defensive positions.

He had served in the Corps since 2004, after previously serving in the Army.

The 30-year-old specialised as a heavy weapons expert and was providing protection for his patrol base when he was fatally wounded.

“You lived to be a hero and died a hero,” said his partner Sonia Fleming.

“We are all extremely proud of you and always will be. Your legacy will live on through your three wonderful boys who will aspire to be just like you.”

L/Cpl Taylor’s 13-year-old son Ethan added: “He was a great dad and he did everything for us. He was one in a million and I love him.”

Sgt Al Grant, 9 Troop Sergeant, said his comrade was a devoted family man, proud Welshman, dab hand at DIY and “bootneck through and through”.

He continued: “He was someone I admired and a true friend without a fault. You don’t meet many people in your life like Mike, men who have these attributes.”

A fire-fight also claimed the life of **Sgt Steven ‘Darbs’ Darbyshire**, killed by small arms fire while on patrol near Sangin.

The 35-year-old NCO from Wigan had nearly 15 years’ experience in the Corps behind him, serving in almost every operational theatre in that time – Northern Ireland, Iraq and Afghanistan. He also represented the Marines at rugby league.

He leaves behind his partner, Kate, and two young sons Ryan and Callum.

“Being a Royal Marine was Steven’s life and growing up it was all he wanted to do,” said his family.

“Our world will be a bleaker place without him, his infectious laughter and fantastic sense of humour.”

Sgt ‘Dinger’ Bell, a friend for more than a decade, said: “Darbs would never let you down – he was a constant source of entertainment.

“The father figure of his troop; he had a calming influence on his lads, always putting them first.”

Mne David Hart had been a Royal Marine less than two years, but had already made his mark in the Corps.

The 23-year-old from North Yorkshire was awarded the Commando Medal for his performance during training at Lympstone.

Upon joining 40 Cdo he trained as a combat medic for a newly-formed Police Mentoring Team.

He was killed by a bomb blast while on patrol with comrades from Charlie Company and Afghan National Army troops west of Patrol Base Sangin Tufann.

“There was not an ounce of malice in Dave, he was always cheerful, always upbeat and a friend to everyone.” said Maj Moorhouse.

“He was a marine, no matter the circumstances and no matter the rank, who would always give you the time of day; and who would go out of his way to help you.”

Cpl ‘Tommy’ Steele, section commander, Police Mentoring Troop, added: “In a nutshell, Dave Hart was the most perfect example of a Royal Marine I have ever had the privilege to have known and I was proud to have him in my section.”

Mne Matthew Harrison was another green beret relatively new to the Corps, passing out of Lympstone last October.

There he was awarded the King’s Badge as the best all-round recruit of the most senior Recruit Troop in training.

The 23-year-old from Hemel Hempstead was fatally shot on a patrol with Charlie Coy and Afghan troops from Patrol Base Seylab Doo.

“Matt was unique, full of character and full of life, always up for a challenge. He died doing what he said he ‘needed to do’,” said his parents Brian and Janette.

“Behind the marine, Matt had a sensitive soft heart; a precious, loveable son. Life is precious; only God knows how precious Matt was.”

Troop Sergeant 7 Troop, Sgt Danny ‘Smudge’ Smith, said Mne Harrison possessed intelligence and bravery in abundance.

“No matter how hard or dangerous the task, Matt always wore his huge smile, content in the knowledge he was doing all in his power to keep his 7 Troop brothers safe,” he added.

“I stand here today mourning the loss of a brother in arms and a man I am privileged to be able to call a friend.”

Mne Jonathan Crookes was killed by an explosion while trying to help evacuate a casualty during a foot patrol with Charlie Coy comrades near Sangin.

The 26-year-old reservist from Halesowen earned the Commando Dagger as the best all-round recruit in training when he passed out of Lympstone in 2006.

He was using his experiences on his second tour of duty in Afghanistan to help him with his university studies on International Relations.

“‘Crooksey’ was a mountain of a man, strong, powerful and brave. His courage knew no bounds, he was one of the bravest of the brave in Charlie Company and that accolade is only reserved for my point men,” said Maj Moorhouse.

“These men are exceptional; they lead the patrols that move along the alleys and compounds of Sangin in the full knowledge of the danger that exists around every corner.”

Sgt Smith said his fellow marines regarded Crooksey as a “shield of strength” who had saved the lives of many of his comrades by uncovering bombs.

“The men in 7 Troop looked up to Crooksey as a big brother, our very own gentle giant who was their pillar of strength, confidently looking out for the boys.”



● *Band of brothers... (l-r) Mne Paul Warren – ‘something special’; L/Cpl Michael Taylor – ‘one in a million’; Sgt Steven ‘Darbs’ Darbyshire – ‘always putting the lads first’; Mne David Hart – ‘the most perfect example of a Royal Marine’; Mne Matthew Harrison – ‘always up for a challenge’; Mne Jonathan Crookes – ‘his courage knew no bounds.’*



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“I can’t thank SSAFA enough for setting the group up. It helps just knowing other mums are in your situation and that you are not totally on your own.”

Karen’s eldest son Lee, 22, was killed by a sniper while serving in Iraq. His loss was devastating for the close knit family and Karen was left feeling isolated and unable to talk about how she felt. Joining the SSAFA Forces Help Support Group for Bereaved Families with her other son Ryan gave them both the chance to meet other people with similar experiences.

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picture: la(phot) si ethell, 40 cdo

At the going down of the sun

WITH the sun heading for the horizon, 40 Commando medic L/Cpl Hanlon pauses to reflect on another day at Forward Operating Base Zeebrugge, high above Kajaki and Helmand's Green Zone.

For half a decade this outpost has been one of the focal points of Britain's efforts to stabilise southern Afghanistan and bring some form of normality to the region.

But no longer.

The 150 or so men of the 40 Cdo Battlegroup deployed to Kajaki have handed over responsibility for the district to the Americans, permitting a 'surge' by the Royals in another Helmand hotspot.

"British forces are redeploying from Kajaki with their heads held high, with the knowledge that they have changed the area for the better," said Major General Gordon Messenger RM, former Task Force Helmand commander and the senior spokesman for British operations in Afghanistan.

That work has focused in particular on restoring the Kajaki Dam to full working order; providing irrigation to some 700 square miles of farmland and power to homes in Lashkar Gah, Musa Qaleh and Sangin.

The latter town lies twenty miles downstream on the Helmand River.

It is to there that the majority of the Kajaki-based commandos redeployed – for now.

Like Kajaki, British troops will be pulling out of Sangin – later this year, Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox told Parliament.

Until then, however, the district demands continued commitment and, tragically, continued sacrifice.

Of all the villages, towns and districts in Helmand, the name of Sangin is writ large on the roll of honour.

One in three British casualties killed in Afghanistan has died in or around Sangin – six Royal Marines in the past month alone.

Many of the dead of Sangin have been victims of Improvised Explosive Devices (bombs).

The men of Charlie Company, 40 Cdo, set out to clear one village, Pylae, of booby traps.

Previous patrols by the Royals determined that there was lively insurgent activity in the village – and the insurgents had planted a sizeable number of IEDs, not least in Pylae's market street.

The operation to render the heart of the village safe began with the commandos occupying high ground – in this instance a compound rooftop, where Charlie Coy established an observation post.

Then the marines moved in on the ground, accompanied by Army bomb disposal experts.

Despite the cordon drawn around the centre of Pylae, some locals chose to continue life as normal.

"We all have a bit of rudimentary Pashtu which we shouted at the locals as they came towards us," explained Lt Doug Spencer RM.

"Some came past on motorbikes quite fast and ignoring our shouts, so we had to fire mini flares into the air above the motorbikes as they come by – that usually stops them."

Other locals were not so obliging; the marines and bomb disposal team were fired upon on a couple of occasions. To give additional protection to the soldiers, the Royals threw up a smoke screen.

In time, as with most tasks in Helmand, such a mission will be performed by Afghan troops and Afghan National Police, who are being trained by numerous British-led mentoring teams.

And what you don't see on the 24-hour rolling news channels and in your morning newspaper is that they're taking casualties alongside Britons.

"We have tried to tell the police officers here not to touch IEDs if they find them, but to tell us where they are and we will deal with them," said Capt Dom Rogers RM, Officer Commanding 40 Cdo's Police Mentoring Team in Sangin.

"But often, such is their outrage that the Taleban have planted these devices in a built-up area, they don't want to wait to remove them. They will often carry them back to us in triumph."

On one patrol, the Afghan policemen uncovered four bombs on a road leading to a security compound and dug them up. As they tackled a fifth device, it exploded. Two police were killed, a third injured.

"The incident has had a profound effect on the police as the two who lost their lives were very popular, not just with the ANP but also the guys in the PMT who lived, worked and patrolled with them on a daily basis.

"One of the marines thought it would be a good idea to have a 'joint' memorial service with the ANP in their memory and the whole event has, I think, brought the policemen and the Marines closer together."

Despite the deaths, Capt Rogers said the Royals could take a lot of encouragement from the progress the Afghan police were making.

"The good thing is that this operation proved the ANP are now confident enough to run their operations with little support from us," the Royal Marine officer added.

"We are training Afghan bomb disposal experts but they are not up to speed yet. And until then they have to rely on ISAF."

WITH Afghanistan being the military's – and the Senior Service's – 'main effort', there's been a succession of high-ranking figures visiting 40 Commando on the ground.

Last month the First Sea Lord was in theatre.

In July, Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar, Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery and Commandant General Royal Marines Maj Gen Buster Howes have all been on the ground in Helmand.

A tour of this troubled province invariably begins at Camp Bastion, the hub of UK operations.

It is the principal base for the Commando Helicopter Force and home to the main field hospital in Helmand; the former is, of course, very dark blue while the latter is staffed by a large Royal Navy contingent.

While Admiral Soar met the nursing and surgical staff, Maj Gen Howes talked with fellow green berets wounded in action in Helmand.

Then Admiral Soar thanked the CHF team for rising to the demands made of them.

"On behalf of the Navy, I just want to thank you. Your efforts are appreciated and the wider MOD is clearly aware of the contribution you make," he told the assembled ranks.

On leaving Camp Bastion, the three senior officers flew by helicopter to Task Force Helmand headquarters in Lashkar Gah where they were met by the Commander of 4th Mechanized Brigade, Brigadier Richard Felton, who gave them an update on the situation in Helmand province.

And then it was on to the front line of the war against insurgency with a flight by Chinook to Sangin to meet the men of 40 Cdo.

The guests donned body armour and protective clothing before being guided through Forward Operating Base Jackson to the Fire Support Group tower.

From this elevated position the party could view all of the surrounding area and receive a detailed brief from 40 Cdo's CO Lt Col Paul James.

The trio were also introduced to the district governor, police and army chiefs, before a final road move in Mastiff and Jackal vehicles to Forward Operating Base Nolay to meet Alpha Company before leaving theatre.

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● *Home to mother... Somerset's boarding party return to the frigate after honing their skills in the northern Gulf*

Pictures: LA(Phot) Jenny Lodge, FRPU East

The numb3rs game

PRACTICE makes perfect.

And you can never practise the art of boarding operations too much – as the sailors and Royal Marines of HMS Somerset are finding.

The frigate has just taken over maritime security duties in the northern Arabian Gulf from her sister St Albans.

And that means a lot of inspections of shipping, especially dhows, in these busy waters.

The Type 23's boarding teams conducted extensive training at HMS Raleigh before the ship departed Devonport.

There was yet more thorough drill in the eastern Med as the ship stopped in Souda Bay, Crete, home to NATO's Maritime Interdiction Operational Training Centre.

There they teach the difficult arts of controlling aggressive crew, fast roping, and close quarters battle as well as giving visiting warships time on the range.

The Greek Special Forces were in charge of the training sessions, which culminated in a firefight and battle aboard a specialist training ship, where the sailors and green berets loaded 'simunition' – simulated ammunition, 9mm paint rounds – into their weapons.

Time and again the Royals and sailors rehearsed close-quarter combat in the confines of this specialist environment – the perfect precursor to operations east of Suez.

"The training was physically demanding – and of enormous benefit," said Lt Jim Harkin, Somerset's boarding officer.

"Crete provided us with a highly-professional training package, allowing the team to train in the heat, handle different weapons, and generally extract safely from most non-compliant boarding situations."

And so on to the operational theatre...

For the third time in 18 months, Somerset made her way through the Suez Canal (but this was the first time the Type 23 had led the USS Winston S Churchill through the great man-made waterway).

Once in the Red Sea, Somerset's mission began in earnest as she 'plugged in' to Combined Task Force 150 and its efforts to safeguard shipping.

The international task force is responsible for helping to ensure 33,000 ships and boats – carrying, *inter alia*, half the world's oil and gas – safely use more than 2.4 million square miles of sea and ocean (that's 25 times the size of the UK) which falls under 150's responsibility.

Are you with us so far? Good.

Because once through the infamous Bab el Mandeb strait at the foot of the Red Sea, the frigate entered a new area of responsibility, CTF 151.

Although it lies right in the middle of 150's domain, 151 has a specific anti-piracy role across around one million square miles of sea.

Since forming last year, the newish force has helped to reduce brigandage in the Gulf of Aden by some 15 per cent.

This is an old stomping ground for Somerset; she was here only last summer during the Taurus deployment when the intelligence she gathered helped analysts understand the 'pattern of life' in the area.

So we've had 150 and 151. Logically, 152 comes next.

And for once logic prevails.

CTF 152 covers the entire Gulf – from the Strait of Hormuz to the shores of Iraq – and will be Somerset's home for the next three months.

Based in Bahrain, it's the force's mission to ensure commercial shipping in the Gulf goes about its business peacefully.

So after receiving the reins from her sister St Albans, Somerset made for the northern Gulf.

She did so with Second Sea Lord designate Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery aboard (he's subsequently taken over from Vice Admiral Sir Alan Massey as the RN's senior personnel officer).

He sailed from Bahrain embarked in HMS Pembroke before a mid-Gulf rendezvous with the T23.

The admiral toured the ship and, in doing so, chatted with sailors about current personnel issues and wider defence matters, not least pay and the ongoing defence review.

He also witnessed the boarding team in action in earnest. In her first week 'on task' Somerset conducted 76 'Approach and Assist Visits' – the new name for reassurance visits, although the aim is the same: to reassure local mariners that Allied warships are present to protect them.

"Somerset's already having a significant effect in the Gulf through her presence and the engagement my boarding team have had with seafarers," said Commanding Officer Cdr Andrew Burns.

"The reassurance we have been able to provide to the local maritime community indicates the commitment of coalition forces to security and stability.

"My team are focused on the task in hand and ready for any eventuality in this unpredictable theatre of operations."

As Somerset settled into her 152 mission, the ship held a service of remembrance for 19 Servicemen – 11 from 40 Commando and eight from 1 Mercian Regiment – on Operation Herrick 12 (the latest roulement of troops in Afghanistan), a service organised by Lt Richard Garman RM, Pte Robin Warburton 1MR, and Somerset's chaplain Matt Godfrey.

And on a lighter note.... While bimbling around the Gulf news came through that a trophy would soon be making its way out to Somerset.

By far and away, the Devonport warship is the fastest in the Fleet – the fastest at getting to the top of the Rock.

HMS Temeraire keeps a tally of the best times ship's companies run the infamous Rock Race, counting the first five runners crossing the line.

The Somerset's time of 2h 31m 11s was nearly seven minutes better than Kent and some 22 minutes faster than that posted by St Albans on her way out to the Gulf.



● *Fully loaded... The Royal Marines of HMS Somerset's boarding team show they mean business*

PADI power on Chatham

AS WELL as chasing pirates around the Indian Ocean, the men and women of HMS Chatham have proved rather adept beneath the waves.

When the 'Up and At Em' sailed from Devonport in January there were only 28 PADI (Professional Association Diving Instructors) and 2 BSAC (British Sub Aqua Club) qualified divers on board...

...and as the Type 22's seven-month deployment nears its close, the number is 58 – and what a mixed bag it is.

PADIs aboard include Commanding Officer Cdr Simon Huntington (who is also a keen Advanced Open Water Diver), members of the embarked Royal Marines detachment and also a number of the SNMG2 Flag Staff.

The numbers have been swelled thanks to visits to some first-rate dive sites in Jordon, Egypt, the Seychelles, Mirbat in Oman and Dar es Salaam in Tanzania.

The spur for much of the increased diving comes courtesy of Chatham's aircraft controller, LS John Ellis-Martin, who's arranged many of the frigate's underwater activities.

"I have been diving for a couple of years and wanted more people to enjoy the experience," he said.

"Thankfully this trip has not disappointed, seeing rare sights such as guitar sharks and manta rays.

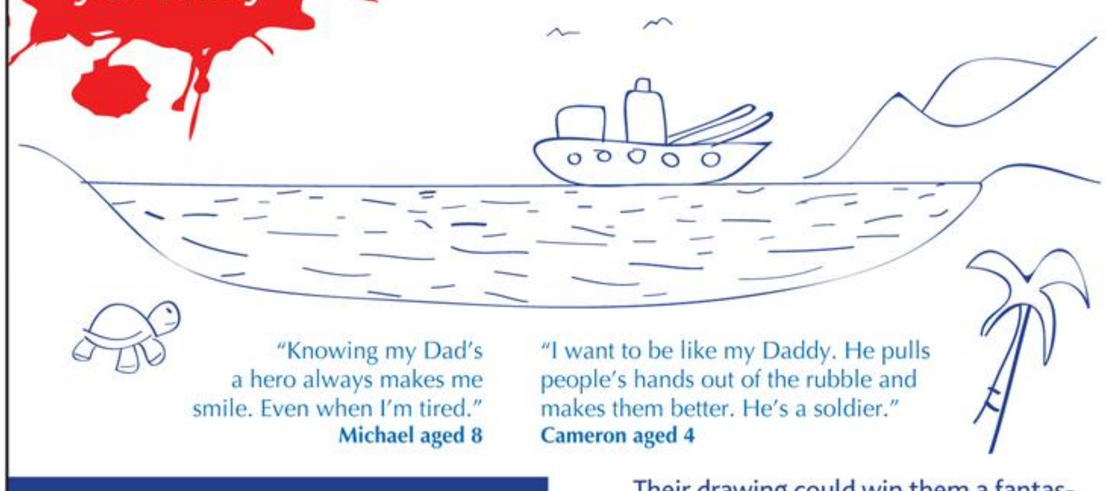
"Even people diving for the first time have had the chance to see dolphins, reef sharks, eagle and blue spotted rays, and moray eels; this has inspired them to become PADI divers – and some have managed to become Advanced Open Water Divers through the opportunities on this deployment alone.

"I have enjoyed making arrangements for everyone who wanted to dive because it's such an interesting sport and I'm glad more people are getting into it."

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"Knowing my Dad's a hero always makes me smile. Even when I'm tired." **Michael aged 8**

"I want to be like my Daddy. He pulls people's hands out of the rubble and makes them better. He's a soldier." **Cameron aged 4**

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Bands in the sun

A FIREWORKS finale (*pictured here by RN Photographer of the Year LA(Phot) Keith Morgan*) brings the curtain down on the first evening of the South Coast Proms – one of two high-profile musical events staged in Portsmouth this past month.

Some 8,000 people enjoyed two nights of first-class entertainment courtesy of the Massed Bands of Her Majesty's Royal Marines on Whale Island as Portsmouth Festivities, an annual celebration of the arts, came to an end.

The audience were among the first people to hear a new composition by the Royal Marines, *Wootton Bassett*.

The five-minute piece was written by Maj Pete Curtis to commemorate the Wiltshire town which comes to a halt to pay its respects when Britain's fallen are flown home from Afghanistan.

As well as the sound of church bells, the march attempts to recreate the drone of the C17 Globemaster aircraft which fly bodies into nearby RAF Lyneham.

Meanwhile in the city's Guildhall Square...

Nine bands from establishments across the RN/RM converged on Portsmouth for the annual Volunteer Bands festival.

And it was the amateur musicians of HMS Heron who were triumphant, lifting four trophies – including best band – after a day of performances inside and outside Pompey's landmark Guildhall.

The contest opened in glorious sunshine in Guildhall Square with the marching section of the contest, and continued in the afternoon with a 15-minute concert performance by each of the competing bands.

HMS Heron band (*pictured below by LA(Phot) Kaz Williams during the marching demonstration*) was awarded the Bambara Trophy for the best Fleet Air Arm band; the Willis Trophy for the best marching display; the Richard Johns Memorial Trophy for the concert band placed second and the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy for the best overall band.

"I am the proudest bandmaster in the world at the moment and privileged to conduct the best band in the Royal Navy," said Heron's instructor, a beaming Band C/Sgt Johnny Morrish.

"The band worked extremely hard over the last few months with lots of late evening rehearsals.

"Everything seemed to come together very nicely before the festival and I had a great feeling in the week leading up to the competition.

"They have done themselves proud and I am really pleased they have something to show for all their hard work."





● *HMS Kent's sailors salute the Swedish royal couple in Stockholm*
Picture: LA(Phot) Dean Nixon, FRPU East

Swede talking Kent

TWO Royal couples, one Defence Secretary, 150 VIPs, 3,000 members of the public – just a typical fortnight in the life of HMS Kent.

The frigate carried out a whistlestop European tour which took in Sweden for a Royal wedding and celebration of links with the UK, then moved to Cardiff as the RN's very visible presence in the national event celebrating Armed Forces Day.

To Sweden first and the port of Gothenburg and the three-day Think Britain... which encourages Swedes to, er, think about Britain – be it industry, education, literature, tourism, even golf.

It was HMS Kent's presence which was – in the words of Andrew Mitchell, Britain's Ambassador to Sweden – "the jewel in the crown" of festivities.

The ship hosted an official reception to celebrate the Queen's birthday as well as an official dinner for VIPs, headed by Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar.

Ashore there was the solemn rededication of a monument to one of the forgotten episodes of RN history.

Britain has close ties with Sweden going back more than two centuries – thanks not least to the Royal Navy.

At the height of the Napoleonic Wars, Britain's Baltic Fleet helped protect Sweden from invasion, led by the great Admiral Sir James Saumarez.

A memorial to the admiral can be found outside the city hall. It was defaced a couple of years ago, but has since been restored and was rededicated in style in the presence of British and Swedish sailors, who also paraded through the city's streets, while Kent fired a 19-gun salute in honour.

On the business front, Admiral Soar sat down with Swedish naval leaders to discuss military cooperation between the two countries.

Now several paragraphs ago we mentioned golf. Eleven men of Kent took their woods, irons and putters to St Jorgen course for an Anglo-Swedish competition. Prizes included another chance to play the Swedish fairways, or a round at the famous Celtic Manor course in Wales... which is hosting this year's Ryder Cup.

Upon leaving Gothenburg, the Type 23 made for the Swedish capital – but there was more honouring the fallen of the Napoleonic era on the way to Stockholm, first at Laholm, 90 miles south of Gothenburg, then on the rather austere island of Hanö in the Bay of Hanö (on Sweden's southern Baltic coast).

The latter served as the base for the Royal Navy during the Napoleonic era. During two years' operations on Hanö, 15 British sailors died; they were laid to rest in the English Seaman's Graveyard.

It was another 150 years before a large wooden cross was erected in the cemetery – and it was there that Kent's sailors, led by their CO, paid their respects, heading ashore to lay a wreath before being invited to a reception in the town hall.

And so to Stockholm and the society event of the year in these parts: a royal wedding.

More than half a million Swedes poured on to the streets of the Venice of the North to witness celebrations surrounding the marriage of the heiress to the throne, Crown Princess Victoria, and personal trainer/gym owner Daniel Westling.

Kent could be found in the Strommen Channel with Swedish warships and the royal yachts of Norway and Denmark.

Rowing between the vessels was the royal barge, carrying the newlyweds around the harbour and back to the royal palace. As it passed HMS Kent, the sailors – in time-honoured tradition – cheered ship.

The Swedes were not the only royal couple to see Kent; the ship hosted the Earl and Countess of Wessex, who were attending the wedding on behalf of the Queen.

The Wessexes met members of the ship's company and used the frigate as the backdrop for a medal presentation; Swede Dan Stan Olsson was made an honorary CBE for his services promoting trade between Britain and his native land.

"I'm proud to have been part of such a special occasion – I never expected I'd do anything like this when I joined the Navy," said AB 'Meg' Ryan.

"It's the first time I've met anyone from the royal family – they were really interested in what the ship had been doing."

Blimey, we managed to get through an article about Sweden without mentioning Abba, Ikea and *The Muppets* chef...

And so on to Cardiff and a weekend alongside at Britannia Quay – slap bang in the heart of the Welsh capital.

Kent was by some distance the largest attendee at the national event for Armed Forces Day 2010, dwarfing stands by the junior Services (*quite right – Ed*).

Before arriving in Cardiff, the ship hosted BBC News reporter Colette Hume and her cameraman/producer Tim Jones who wanted to experience 24 hours in the life of a Royal Navy warship, capturing everything on board from call the hands at 7am to Sunset at the day's end.

Events alongside continued with a reception and capability demonstration for more than 150 VIPs. The finale of the evening was Beat Retreat and Ceremonial Sunset on the Type 23's flight deck with a Royal Marines Band and 12-man guard, led by Lt Jo Chambers.

On Armed Forces Day itself – one of the hottest days of the summer – there were numerous live TV broadcasts from Kent, while a 48-man platoon marched proudly through the city next to serving men and women from the other Armed Forces (*pictured below by PO(Phot) Mez Merrill*), plus veterans and cadets, led by HRH Prince of Wales.

"There are fewer people in the Armed Forces than ever before which means fewer people in the general public will know someone in the armed forces," Kent's CO Cdr Nick Cooke-Priest said of Armed Forces Day.

"This gives us a tremendous opportunity to open ourselves up and perhaps help the understanding of what we do."

Over the weekend, the ship was open to visitors from the public; in excess of 3,000 crossed the gangway to gather a taste of life onboard.

The ship's now resuming more typical RN duties, hosting a class of student principal warfare officers.

■ **You** can watch a four-minute BBC News report on life aboard Kent at news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/10410694.stm



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PO2 8RN
Telephone: 023 9263 9534
Fax: 023 9267 7574
Email: rnchildren@btconnect.com

Pole position

WHILE all eyes were fixed on Cardiff for Armed Forces Day (*see page 13*), one week beforehand the Welsh capital hosted more solemn ceremonies to commemorate one of the Royal Navy's most famous – and tragic – figures: Capt Robert Falcon Scott.

One hundred years to the day – June 15 1910 – that the ill-fated explorer's ship Terra Nova departed Cardiff, the present-day survey ship named for the South Pole explorer could be found in Cardiff's Britannia Quay at the heart of a week of commemorative events.

Scott led a five-strong party in a bid to become the first person to reach the South Pole – only to be beaten in the attempt by Roald Amundsen. The Norwegian led his team back to safety and glory. Scott's team perished, but entered immortality.

A century later, a large crowd gathered to watch tugs helping HMS Scott – whose most recent deployment, fittingly, was to the Antarctic – into the narrow confines of the lock leading to the quay.

As soon as the survey ship was secured alongside, Commanding Officer Cdr Gary Hesling paid an official visit to the city's lord mayor, while on the quayside reservists from HMS Cambria, the local URNU and Sea Cadets held divisions.

That was followed by an official reception for 200 guests and VIPs, including Wales' First Minister, Carwyn Jones, and the Navy Regional Commander for Wales and the West of England, Cdre Jamie Miller.

The second day alongside saw more visitors aboard – this time students from local 6th form colleges and Cardiff University students who either had an interest in hydrography, geology, and geography (slap bang within HMS Scott's remit), or the wider Royal Navy.

Other visitors to the Scott included the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Swansea – the ship's affiliated city – who invited the ship's company to an evening in Mansion House to relax a little and strengthen bonds between the ship and the Welsh city.

And then came more general visitors. Three thousand to be precise as the survey vessel opened its gangway to visitors.

The ship's company had arranged numerous demonstrations and displays, including paintings by artist Rowan Huntley who accompanied Scott during the Antarctic deployment, plus the images of LA(Phot) Karen Williams, the offical RN photographer for the trip south (it's her shots which also adorn this page).

The British Antarctic Survey brought various pieces of equipment which their personnel take with them on an expedition and the Scott Polar Research Institute staged an exhibition of photographs by the great Herbert Ponting, who accompanied Scott's final expedition.

Demonstrations of fire fighting and damage control equipment proved to be especially popular, particularly with local Sea Cadets, who were given a chance to show off their firefighting skills after a tour of the ship.

Hoses were rigged on the foredeck and water was turned on. Participants quickly realised how wet they'd get, but the enthusiasm and enjoyment could be seen on their faces as the cadets squelched along the jetty to waiting parents (who probably weren't quite so enthusiastic about soaking kids sitting in their cars...).

To help with the hosting of so many events onboard – and help their training – 17 chefs and stewards from the logistics school at HMS Raleigh were dispatched to Scott. For many it was the first time onboard a sea-going ship, serving food to both crew and guests at official functions.

Despite the busy schedule some of the ship's company got the chance to visit some of Cardiff's sights, including the Millennium Stadium and Welsh Assembly Building – an architectural marvel, according to the sailors.

The visit to Cardiff reached its climax on the centennial of Terra Nova's departure.

A VIP breakfast was provided aboard Scott for dignitaries such as as members of the Captain Scott Society, Cardiff's lord mayor and Cdre Miller.

With the aid of the Band of the Royal Marines ceremonial colours was held on Scott's quarterdeck.

Then the ship's company lined the survey vessel's decks to wave off the tall ship Stavros S Niarchos as she re-enacted Terra Nova's historic departure.

"It was an honour and privilege for HMS Scott to participate in the commemorative events to remember and recognize the remarkable achievements of Captain Scott and his expedition party," said Cdr Hesling.

"It could be no more fitting for the Royal Navy's ocean survey vessel, named after Captain Scott and recently returned from her inaugural deployment to Antarctica, to be in Cardiff to remember a fellow naval officer who was amongst the great Antarctic explorers."









Sceptre's apple bye

THERE'LL be plenty to drink when HMS Sceptre ends her life as she began it.

Britain's oldest nuclear submarine was launched not with champers but with the shattering of a bottle of cider against her hull on the slipway at Barrow back in 1976.

So it's only right that the same tipple marks the hunter-killer's passing a generation later.

The cider comes courtesy of Gaymer's, who invited the boat's senior ratings to the Royal Bath and West Show and offered to provide their produce for the decommissioning ceremony.

A couple of barrels of Gaymer's will be making their way to the boat in time for the decommissioning, while the cider firm now has a Sceptre plaque and captain's coin as a thank-you.

Sceptre's passing after 32 years' service brings the curtain down on the Swiftsure class, boats which have served the nation since the early 1970s.

The December 10 decommissioning ceremony in Devonport (where the boat will be laid up rather than her traditional home on the Clyde) will celebrate the service the entire class has performed.

To that end, the ceremony is open to everyone who served in an S-boat, not just Sceptre, on a first-come, first-served basis.

"December 10 will be a poignant day as we say goodbye not only to Sceptre, but also see the end of the S-boat programme," said Sceptre's final CO Cdr Steve Waller.

"Rest assured, we will make the most of this opportunity to commemorate the work of the Swiftsure class."

The decommissioning will see ceremonial divisions, followed by a drinks reception and buffet.

Tickets are £10, available from decommissioning officer Lt Mike Hitchings, HMS Sceptre, BFPO 380.

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SQUADRONS OF THE FLEET AIR ARM No.8

Gone fishing

FISHING for submarines, that is...

If there's a boat to be found, then there's a good chance that a Merlin of 829 Naval Air Squadron – The Kingfishers – are doing the searching.

The Culdrose-based squadron is one of three front-line units operating the £40m helicopter.

Whereas their Cornish bedfellows – 814 and 820 – often deploy *en masse* (see pages 21-25 for news of the Flying Tigers on Auriga), it's a solitary life for the 829 team who operate as ship's flights, typically from the stern of a Type 23 frigate, occasionally from an RFA.

Indeed, one 829 Merlin has just returned from RFA Argus in southern France where its presence was specially requested by the French Navy.

The *Marine Nationale* was staging its main anti-submarine exercise of the year – Squale – off Toulon and wanted a Merlin to take part.

To smooth over linguistic differences, the Kingfishers' French exchange officer, *Capitaine de Corvette* Fabrice Dehandschoewercker served as detachment commander.

He bedded down with some of his team aboard Argus; the engineer detachment used the French airfield at Hyères, just outside Toulon, as their base.

Squale saw six French anti-submarine frigates, two maritime patrol aircraft and two French Lynx fitted with dipping sonar joining forces with France's flagship FS Charles de Gaulle, the USS Harry S Truman, and the 829 Merlin to hunt down the attack submarine FS Rubis. The quarry was found.

And when it was all over there was one day's rest to allow aircrew and engineers to sample the delights of the Mediterranean coast (St Tropez was a stone's throw away) and take a dip; with a sea temperature of 20°C, it was not exactly Falmouth Bay...

More commonly, 829 can be found in the Gulf ('Lola' – *pictured, right, by LA(Phot) Steve Johncock* – is presently operating with HMS St Albans) or with a task group escort ('Taliska' flying from HMS Sutherland on the Auriga deployment).

It was for such duties that the Kingfishers were re-formed in 2004, ushering in the squadron's fourth incarnation.

It began life in 1940 at RNAS Ford flying Fairey Albacore torpedo bombers before joining carrier Formidable in the Mediterranean and Middle East, taking part in the hunt for the German cruiser Admiral Hipper and striking at targets in Italian-held Somaliland.

Re-equipped with Swordfish and attached to HMS Illustrious the squadron subsequently took part in the invasion of Madagascar in 1942.

Stood down in October 1942 it re-emerged 12 months later at HMS Daedalus as a torpedo-bomber reconnaissance unit operating Fairey Barracudas which subsequently struck at the German battleship Tirpitz in Norway under Operation Tungsten.

After a 20-year absence, 829 appeared once more in its longest incarnation, assuming its present-day role providing helicopter detachments for the Fleet in 1964. Before it disbanded in 1994, it operated an asortment of Wasps, Whirlwinds and Wessex, and finally Lynx; the latter helped to eliminate Saddam Hussein's Navy in the 1991 Gulf War.

This third incarnation of the squadron came to an end in 1993 when 815 NAS took over parentage of all front-line Lynx ship's flights.

⚓ HMS Sutherland's Merlin flight in action, page 3



Facts and figures

Motto: *non effugient* – they shall not escape
Nickname: *The Kingfishers*
Aircraft: Merlin HM1
Engines: 3 x Rolls Royce Turbomeca 2,200shp gas turbines
Rotor Span: 18.6m
Length: 22.8m
Speed: 167kt
Crew: one pilot; one observer; one aircrewman
Endurance: operational radius of over 200 nautical miles
Sensors: GEC Marconi Blue Kestrel 5000 radar; Thales Flash AQS 950 dipping sonar; GEC-Marconi sonobuoy acoustic processor
Weapons: 4 Stingray torpedoes or Mk 11 Mod 3 depth bombs

HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.76 – Lt Cdr Oliver Gidden GC OBE GM



THE smiles and casual nature of this image – taken at HMS King Alfred in October 1940 – belies the dangerous nature of the work performed by these eight men: bomb disposal at the height of the Battle of Britain and Blitz.

The photograph – from the papers of Lt Cdr Harold Newgass GC held by the Imperial War Museum – features men of the Admiralty RMS – Rendering Mines Safe – Section.

Standing, (*l-r*) Harold McKee and Greville McClinton (both George Medal winners) and a S/Lt McKewen; seated are Horace Taylor GC, John Rouson GM, Oliver Gidden GC MBE GM, Lt Cdr Newgass, and R Horton DSC.

Of these, let us focus on the most highly-decorated of this octet, Oliver Gidden.

His George Medal came courtesy of mine disposal work in Harlesden in September 1940.

Seven months later came the act which earned him the George Cross.

On April 17 1941 he was dispatched to Hungerford Bridge in London where an unexploded bomb added to problems already caused by blazing trains and railway sleepers, plus the Charing Cross Hotel was burning in the background.

Lt Gidden found a mine lying on a live electrical cable, with the bomb fuse primer release mechanism facing down.

First he had to turn over the unexploded ordnance – less than easy as the fuse was extremely sensitive.

When he'd succeeded, he prised a chunk of molten metal from the fuse, intending to insert something to block the mechanism.

The state of the mine by this stage meant inserting such a 'gag' would not work, so the officer spent six hours toiling with a hammer and chisel before he could finally declare the German device safe.

By the war's end, Gidden had risen to the rank of lieutenant commander, added the OBE to his decorations, and was still rendering mines safe, latterly in North-West Europe – including the Scheldt estuary – in the wake of the Allied armies of liberation.

■ THIS image (HU 58422) – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at **www.iwmcollections.org.uk**, by emailing **photos@IWM.org.uk**, or by phoning 0207 416 5333.

With thanks to Ian Proctor

Flying the flag for the Forces



● *Cdr Martin Caxton of Clyde Naval Base flies the flag on Loch Lomond* Picture: LA(Phot) Pepe Hogan

MEMBERS of the public the length and breadth of the UK have been celebrating the past, present and future of the Armed Forces.

From Lossiemouth in Scotland to Penzance in Cornwall, from Coleraine in Northern Ireland to Great Yarmouth in Norfolk, more than 350 cities, towns, villages and communities marked the second annual Armed Forces Day.

In Scotland alone almost 30 towns and cities hosted events, twice the number from last year, with the Stirling Military Show setting the ball rolling.

Among the larger events were those at Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen, with other celebrations in Keith, Greenock, East Kilbride, Ayr, Arbroath, Kirkcaldy, Dumfries, Castle Douglas, Kelso, Paisley, Wick and Dingwall.

Across the Irish Sea, minehunter HMS Bangor was one of the main attractions at her 'home town' when more than 60,000 people attended the annual Sea Bangor Maritime Festival.

The Sandown-class vessel was open to visitors over the weekend, welcoming more than 4,000 people on board, while her CO, Lt Cdr Neil Marriott gave a presentation on the Royal Navy today.

More than a dozen members of the ship's company took part in ceremonies on the Sunday, forming part of an 800-strong parade which included veterans and cadets.

The Navy also provided a Search and Rescue helicopter for an overflight, and the Royal Marines Band from Scotland gave a number of formal and impromptu concerts.

Back in Great Britain, the focus of activities on Armed Forces Day itself was Cardiff, which hosted the second 'national event' (the first was at Chatham last year).

More than 80,000 people enjoyed a full programme of events in the sunshine, including a parade from Cardiff Castle to the city's waterfront led by the Prince of Wales.

A traditional drumhead ceremony was held at Roald Dahl Plass, as were demonstrations by Royal Marines Commandos and the RM Band, while the RAF's Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and the Red Arrows provided aerial entertainment.

The Navy's heavyweight contribution to the day was frigate HMS Kent, alongside at Britannia Quay *(see page 10)*.

But it wasn't all about the big cities and parades – Armed Forces Day was a chance for everyone to demonstrate their support for the Servicemen and women of today, the veterans of yesterday and the future of the Forces in the form of the cadet organisations.

The village of Southwick, just north of Portsmouth, saw trainees from the Defence Police College – formerly HMS Dryad – parade past the college commandant, Grp Capt Sexton RAF, and the village squire, Robin Thistlethwayte.

At the other end of England, the Northern Diving Group took part in Armed Forces Day in Whitehaven, part of the town's festival – members of the public tried out the Explosive Ordnance Disposal suit and watched diving demonstrations.

North of the border, close to the bonnie banks, Cdr Martin Claxton of Clyde Naval Base took to the waters of Loch Lomond in his single scull as a joint venture between Loch Lomond Rowing Club and the RN & RM Rowing Association to show their support.

Martin said: "We all wanted to show our support for Armed Forces Day – and rowing can be a very graceful sport.

"With the weather so good, I was able to fly the flag."

Of course, some of the UK events had a minimal (or non-existent) Senior Service input – the inaugural World Slug Racing Championships at the Horseshoe pub in Shipston-on-Stour, for example ("bring your own slug or rent one for the day"...) which raised money for local and Forces charities.

The Navy's worldwide footprint meant that there were plenty of AFD events to be seen in far-flung venues.

Across the Pond, assault ship HMS Ocean marked the big day while alongside in Morehead City, North Carolina.

The Mighty O had just completed a two-week crossing of the Atlantic and berthed in Morehead City to offload troops and equipment as part of the Auriga 2010 deployment *(see pages 21-25)*.

Service personnel in Spain celebrated AFD a few days early at a cocktail party in Madrid, hosted by Defence Attaché Capt Freddie Price and his wife Angie.

The honour guard was a tri-Service affair, and military representatives from around the world, including Venezuela, Argentina, Russia and the Netherlands, attended.

Further East, Servicemen and women let off steam at an AFD sports day at the British Embassy in Baghdad, when the small, scratch Navy team was pipped at the post by the Army.

A programme including volleyball, tennis and six-a-side football ended with the Pongos snatching victory in a freestyle relay in the embassy pool.

The Navy team consisted in part of members of the advisory group to the Iraqi Navy, who work under the umbrella of the Iraq Training Advisory Mission – Navy (ITAM – Navy), largely based on the coast at Umm Qasr – where an AFD charity barbecue was held at the British Consulate General.

Featuring a pub quiz, the event – which attracted American service personnel, representatives of British industry and ex-pats, raised £785 for various military charities, while UK civil engineer Mott MacDonald added a further £3,275 to the pot.

Finally, in our brief and random look at events – sadly we have too little space to cover them all – bases throughout Helmand province in Afghanistan were festooned with AFD flags as temperatures approached 50°C.

Just as important as showing support was the boost given to the troops by the level of support they could see from the folks 'back home'.



● *HMS Bangor at Eisenhower Pier in Bangor, Northern Ireland* Picture: Mike O'Neill (Defence Press Office NI)



● *The Prince of Wales takes the salute from veterans in Cardiff* Picture: LA(Phot) Dean Nixon



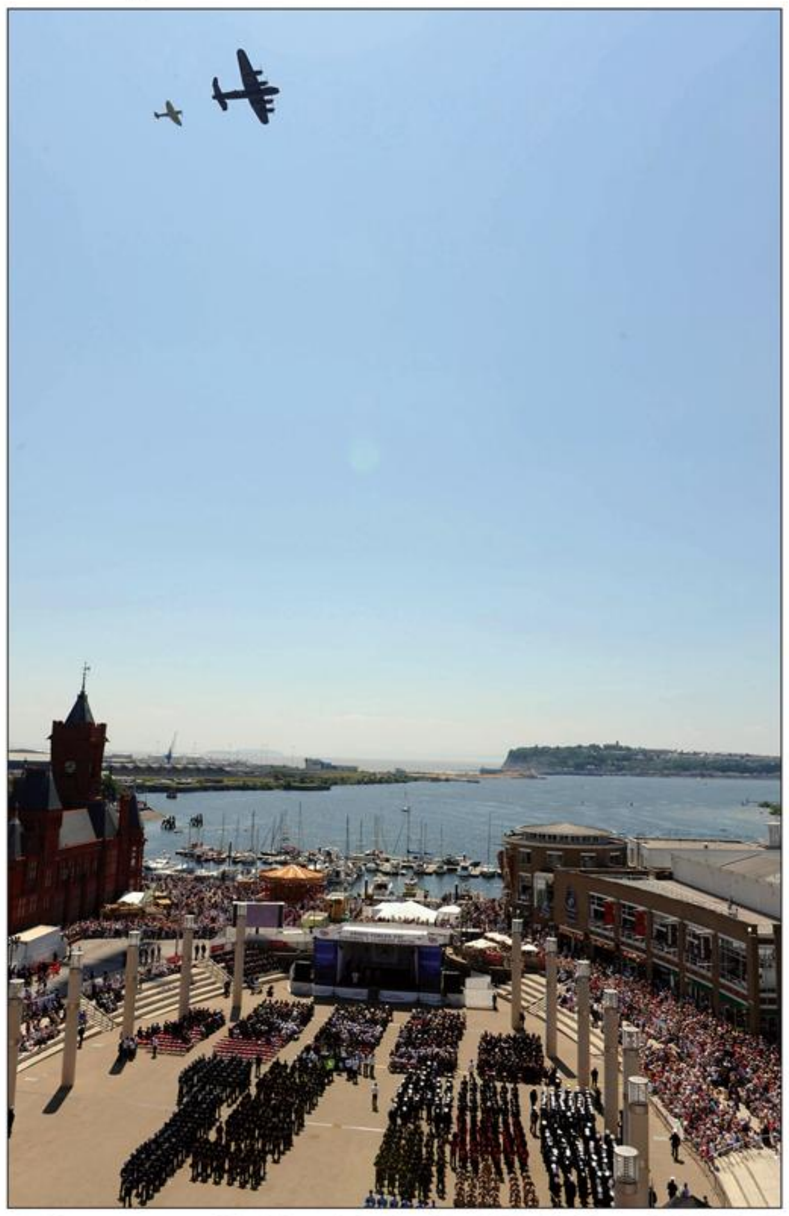
● *Synchronised flag-holding at the British Embassy pool in Baghdad; from left, Maj Sam Stuthridge RE, Chief Tech Shaun Raynor, WO1 Sea Prince RMP and Lt Cdr Beasty Williams*



● *(Above) AB(D) Thomas 'Rick' Stynes on the harbour wall in Whitehaven during the town's Armed Forces Day celebrations*

● *(Right) Chief of the General Staff Sir David Richards takes a break in the Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh, with (from left) Bradley Chandler, from Virginia USA, Ansley Odell, from Atlanta USA, Maggie Downs, from Grangemouth, Tony Scappaticcio, from South Queensferry, and Sophie Brockie, from Grangemouth*

Picture: Mark Owens (Army)



● *A Lancaster and Spitfire of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight fly over the crowds in Cardiff* Picture: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill

Scotland next...

EDINBURGH will have the honour of hosting the national Armed Forces Day flagship event next summer on Saturday June 25.

Speaking at Cardiff during this year's event, Defence Secretary Liam Fox announced the venue for 2011, adding that he was sure "Edinburgh city council, the local community and our Forces across Scotland will provide a celebration befitting such a great capital city."

Edinburgh's Lord Provost George Grubb said: "It's a tremendous honour for Edinburgh to host Armed Forces Day 2011.

"Plans are already under way to lay on a truly spectacular occasion, and we want the whole city to get behind our troops and veterans – the people, local businesses, schools and community groups."





THE 2010 Peregrine Trophy, the Navy's annual photographic competition, brought together the great and the good – and some Naval photographers whom we quite like as well – to recognise the stunning talent and creativity of this small band of hardworking specialists who highlight the activities of the Service at home and abroad.

THIS section features the work of three Naval phots, but only two are professional.

The rather cheerful image to the left was taken by **LA(Phot) Gregg Macready** on board HMS Ark Royal and netted the **RN Life Without Limits Award**, for the best photograph of a member of the Service at work. And we are reliably informed that: "NA(SE) Adam Bland is showing his excitment to be in Glen Mallen on top of Ark's flightdeck ramp." Of course.

The overhead shot of HMS Cumberland won for **LA(Phot) Steve Johncock** the Best **Maritime Image Award**.

And frequent contender **Cdr David Burns** has grabbed the **Amateur Award** back once more for his image of HMS Ocean basking in the Northern Lights.











IN this section we have two collections which reflect a selection of the images that won best category awards.

Pictures of the Greenwich Painted Hall, the RN rugby team and HMS Dauntless in silver glory won the title of **Royal Navy Photographer of the Year 2010** for **LA(Phot) Keith Morgan**, a relative newcomer to the branch.

And just to prove our credentials here at *Navy News*, Keith's images have graced our cover twice in the past 12 months. (Rumour has it that Keith was banned from leaving the office for exciting jobs for several months as a result.)

Yet this fledgling Phot still managed to wrest the title from seasoned campaigners for his portfolio of four Service-related photographs.

And last year's winner **LA(Phot) Owen King** was awarded the **Mark Hipkin Memorial Trophy**; he said: "I was so honoured to be awarded this trophy which singles out the photographer who has contributed the most in all respects to this branch. Despite winning the main prize last year – this award means a lot more to me."

And back to Keith, whose pictures were part of the portfolio that won his unit **FRPU East** the **Peregrine Trophy** itself. Some of the winning six prints are shown right: a sailor from HMS Iron Duke in the Bahamas; a sombre shot of boxer Lt Lucy O'Connor preparing for a bout, both by LA(Phot) Simmo Simpson; RMs in mourning by LA(Phot) Caroline Davies; and destroyer HMS Manchester's homecoming by **LA(Phot) Alex Cave**.

This same image won Alex the **Media Operations Award** for the best single news image to have the most impact.

And top right, **LA(Phot) Billy Bunting** of RNAS Yeovilton is winner of the **Best Maritime Air Prize** for the best photograph of helicopters for this shot inside an 848 NAS Sea King.

















ABOVE the image of the GR9 Harrier taking off from Ark Royal's flightdeck dominates, and won the **RN Maritime Fixed Wing Award** for the ship's **LA(Phot) Jonathan Hamlet**, whose efforts also netted him the **Digital Award** for deft use of digital enhancement to bring to life in 'The green light' an image of a Harrier preparing to take off.

The Naval boxer getting a pep-talk between rounds won the **Award for Best Sports Image** for **PO(Phot) Tam Macdonald**; and the relaxed shot of people sharing a joke was one of three that gave **LA(Phot) Claire Jones** the **RN Student Award**.

To the left we have the **Navy News Award**; given to **PO(Phot) Dave Husbands** for this picture of Military Cross winner MA Kate Nesbitt in Afghanistan.

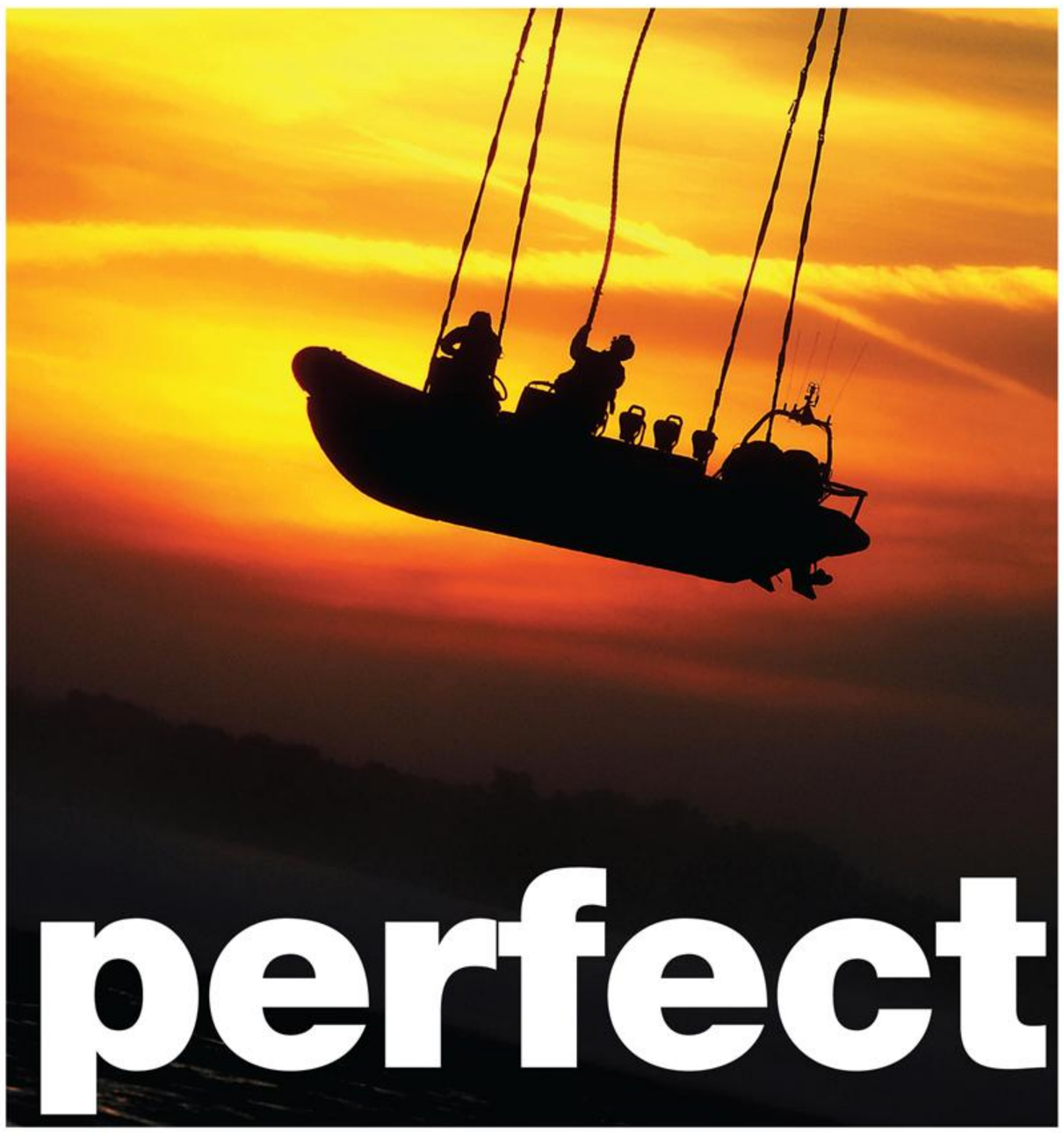
For us this summed up so much of the vital work of the RN Photographic branch; to have captured the moment just after the thick of action as Kate recovers, blood still on her cheek, and surrounded by the men of Charlie Company, 1 Rifles.

And on a similar newsgathering theme the **RN Video Rushes Award** went to **PO(Phot) Mez Merrill** for the short production of rushes to tell a story. While seasoned Peregrine winner **PO(Phot) Sean Clee** received the **Royal Navy Video Award**.



NOW to the **Open Category Award** won by HMS Ocean's **LA(Phot) Bernie Henesy** for the best single image that portrays individualism and artistic achievement for his picture taken during last year's Taurus deployment; and for making us smile.

And finally to the winning unit of the **Commandant General Royal Marines Prize** for a portfolio of three prints on all matters green beret – **Royal Marines Poole**. The image featured right by LA(Phot) Hamish Burke is of a Royal Marine RIB underslung from a Chinook helicopter.



Picture perfect


Picture: Cpl Ralph Merry, RAF

'chuting stars over Gib

YOU want me to leap out of the back of a Herc from several hundred feet into the ocean and save a stricken submariner?

An inquisitive look from a member of the RN's fabled Submarine Parachute Assistance Group as the aptly-named Exercise Gib Splash reaches its most dynamic (and photogenic) phase.

The specialist rescuers decamped from their Gosport home to the Rock (they try to get there once a year) to practise the art of offering immediate assistance to submariners who've escaped a subsmash.

The aim is to jump from the back of a C130 into the sea and create a 'floating village', where SPAG's specially-trained medics and experts in submarine escape and rescue can help deeps as they pop up on the surface.

The SPAGgers are at six hours' notice to move whatever day of the year and have a Hercules on permanent stand-by to go at RAF Lyneham.

It's unlikely the waters the assistance group leap into will be quite as welcoming as the Med admittedly...

During the week-long exercise, the floating medical centre was quickly established off Gib's Western Beach (next to the airport) where several 'survivors', each suffering from a different medical problem, were recovered from the sea.

As well as testing the medical staff, Gib Splash rehearsed the skills of underwater radio communications and boat crews, whose job it was to pull the survivors out of the water and to get them back to the medics as quickly and safely as possible.

"This is the most important part of the exercise and it went off brilliantly," said Lt Cdr Gary Tregunna, Officer in Charge of the Submarine Escape Training Tank.

"We got everything out of the exercise that we wanted to. They were especially good at setting up the floating village – within an hour of arriving at the beach, they were ready to receive casualties."

The other key test of the week in the Med was practising the tricky art of parachuting into the sea.

The better weather in Gibraltar (compared with Blighty) meant the SPAG team could conduct seven 'drops' – for some new members of the group this was their first leap.

"The weather here guarantees that we can carry out at least five parachute drops and the calm, deep water is ideal," Lt Cdr Tregunna enthused.

"The proximity of the airfield to the sea means that we have a shorter turnaround time than anywhere in UK.

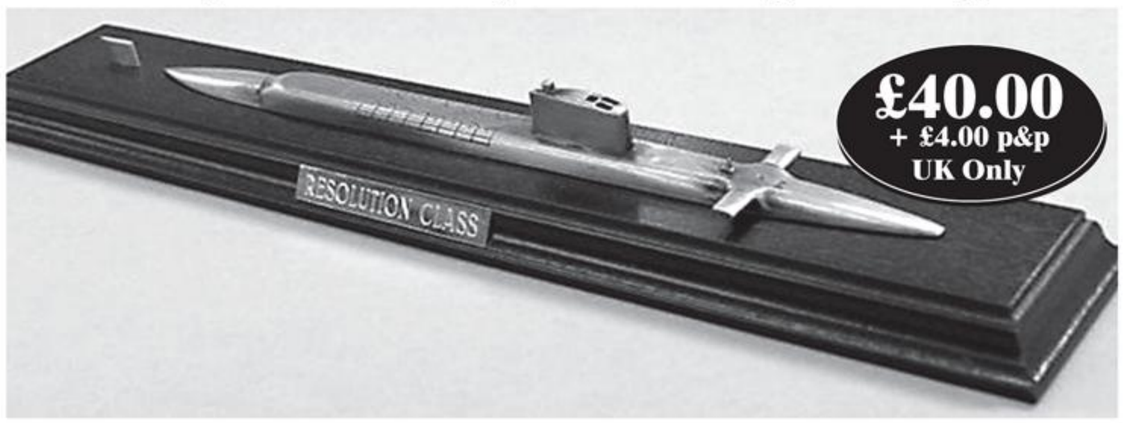
"In addition we rely on the excellent support we get from Gibraltar Squadron, the Gibraltar Defence Police and from RAF Gibraltar."

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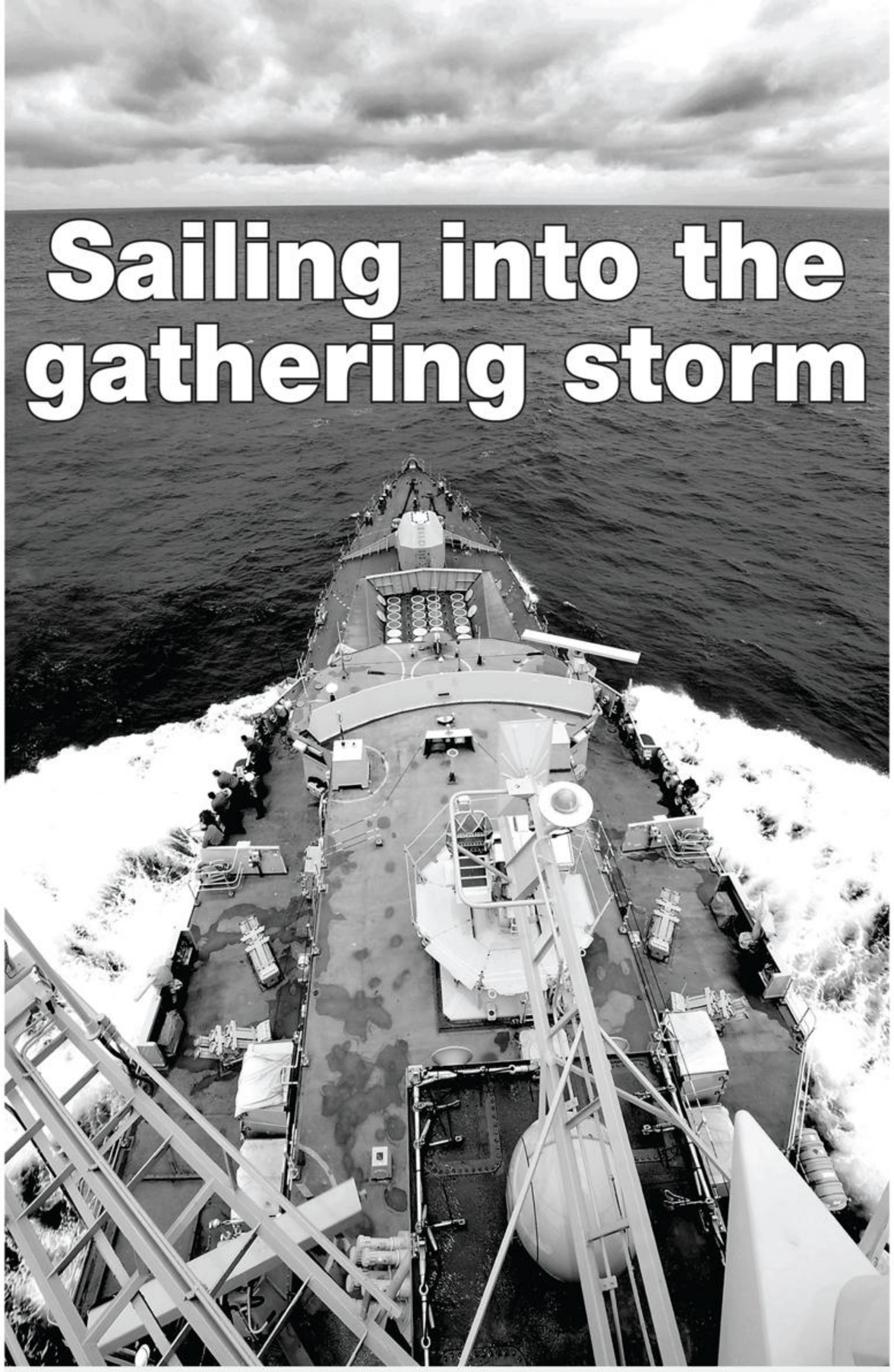


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Sailing into the gathering storm

IF YOU think it's all sunshine and plain sailing east of Suez, well here's evidence to the contrary, courtesy of the good ship Northumberland.

Despite the approaching Cyclone Phet, which was barrelling its way around the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea, the frigate's photographer, LA(Phot) Caroline Davies, climbed to the crow's nest at the top of the main mast after Northumberland had refuelled with the USNS Yukon to capture this sombre image.

Also undeterred by a spot of bad weather were the airmen of 829 Naval Air Squadron who clambered into their Merlin for some winching drills on Northumberland's forecastle.

The Devonport frigate is conducting anti-piracy patrols east of Suez.

But in such weather, the pirates and their skiffs scurry for safety.

Instead, the ship's company practised search and rescue drills (*pictured below, again by LA(Phot) Davies*) – and you only carry out search and rescue missions when the weather's less than clement.

Thankfully Phet abated and the Type 23 could resume her three-week anti-piracy/anti-terrorist/anti-smuggling patrol (aka Operation Calash) before turning south for the idyll of the Seychelles.

The frigate arrived at the main island of the former British colony – Mahé – in time for the Seychelles 17th National Day (June 29).

For the first time in the islands' independent history, a platoon of British sailors took part in the National Day Parade through the streets of the capital Victoria.

The Northumbrians joined comrades from the French Army and Indian Navy as well as Seychelles Defence Forces, security services and youth groups conducting a march past in front of the islands' president James Michel and Commonwealth Secretary General Kamalesh Sharma in slow time – a drill unfamiliar to many of the participants.

After a speech by President Michel, there was another march past by the assembled Servicemen and women, this time in quick time.

When not marching around Victoria, the Brits could be found touring the INS Trishul – a Talwar-class Indian frigate which is a counterpart to the Type 23s – or taking a dip in the crystal blue Seychelles waters.

During Northumberland's demanding patrols, many of the ship's company have had sufficient off-watch time to complete the theory side of PADI diving qualifications...

...which allowed them to complete the practical side of the course in the Seychelles and achieve 'open water' diver status courtesy of a local diving school.

For shipmates who preferred rather drier sporting activities, the rugby squad achieved an impressive 49-31 victory over an invitational XV (it was mainly South African ex-pats who accepted the invitation), but the ship's cricket team suffered a heavy nine-wicket defeat to Victoria CC.



Amphibious deployment in Lancaster



WHEN HMS Lancaster returned to Portsmouth from east of Suez she was greeted with weather more suited to ducks.

Or frogs. One frog in particular, by the name of Fred.

We at *Navy News* have a bit of a weakness for ship's mascots of the toy variety, so when we heard about the frigate's 'Super Exploring Frog' we thought he deserved a wider audience.

Following in the wake of HMS Newcastle's infamous Salty the Bear *et al*, Fred joined Lancaster to help bring lessons to life for schoolchildren, in this case Year One at Woodcot Primary School in Gosport.

Teacher Louise Rycroft was seeking ways of showing a lively class of five-year-olds around the world without leaving their home town, and with a little help from husband Mark she was able to achieve that by proxy.

The children stayed at school and Fred travelled on their behalf, starting his journey by post – Mrs Rycroft's charges marched down to the post office with him, taking it in turns to carry the parcel.

A few thousand nautical miles away, HMS Lancaster was making her way to Cyprus, and it was there that Mark picked up Fred, courtesy of the British Forces' Post Office.

Once he'd recovered from his flight, Fred had a busy time learning all about the ship and her sailors and relaying what he found out back to Woodcot School in frequent reports and photos.

"I think he enjoyed his time in Lancaster and sent back a good report," said LS 'Scouse' Rycroft, a seaman specialist.

"I think the children are hoping he will deploy again – it depends where I go next."

Lancaster, having helped protect merchant ships from pirates off Somalia, is now on exercises in home waters and due to enter refit next month.

Fred, meanwhile, has settled back into life at school, according to Louise.

He goes home every night with a different child, as does his oppo Harriet the Hedgehog (who declined the trip with Lancaster as she is nervous of flying).

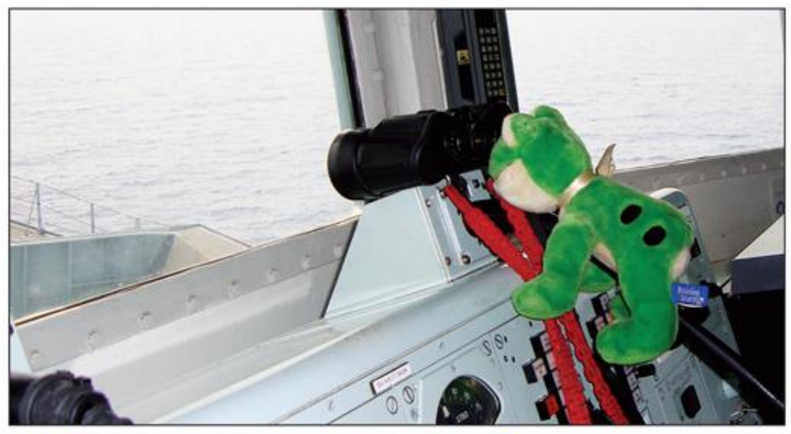
Fred is apparently keen to go abroad again; he has been on holiday with a teacher – which is why he recognised Malta when he arrived with the frigate.







● *Fred takes the controls of HMS Lancaster's sea boat*







● *From top: Fred checks the compass and keeps a good lookout for other shipping, then seeks a bit of help with his reading book from the frigate's Education Officer; above, the intrepid amphibian safely back home with the children of Year One at Woodcot Primary School in Gosport*

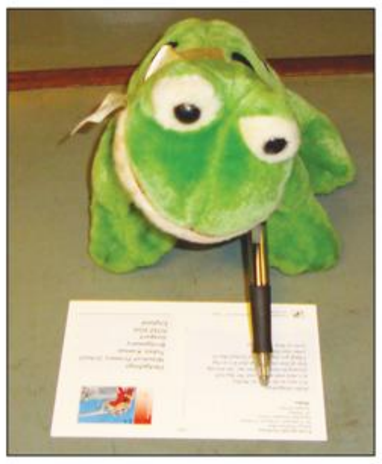


● *Fred checks the radar for shipping then plays uckers with his shipmates (above), and turns in after a tiring day (top)*

● *HMS Lancaster arrives home in Portsmouth in the rain*









● *Fred the Frog takes a close look at HMS Lancaster's Lynx (above), watches TV in the junior rates' mess (right) and writes a postcard to his fans at Woodcot School (above right)*

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A FORCE FOR GOOD



● *HMS Ocean's CO Capt Keith Blount joins the crew on the Race for Life*

Picture: LA(Phot) Guy Pool

Pink tint to life at sea

THE steely flight deck of HMS Ocean was turned into a sea of pink and taffeta as the ship crossed the Atlantic on her way to Auriga, with nearly 100 of her company taking part in the national Race for Life charity fun run.

Many of the runners chose to wear fancy dress for the run, which was organised by Officer Cadets Lucy Ashton and Rachel Turner, and raised more than £500 for cancer charities.

Twelve laps of the flight deck were required to reach the 5km target in HMS Ocean – while their colleagues in HMS Chatham, raising money for the same cause, needed to run 24.

Fifteen women from the frigate raised £700 while the frigate was alongside in Limassol, in Cyprus.

Chatham's clubz, LPT Kelly Gooch, said: "We are on our return from a hard-working seven-month deployment and the weather conditions were extremely hot, so the girls did very well."

Ditch spins dits

AFTER a lifetime on the Jungly helicopter circuit George Ditch had more good dits than most, so how better to spend his leisure hours than writing them down and turning them into a book?

By popular request from his family and friends, George turned the accumulated experience of his 23 years in the Fleet Air Arm into a book called *Laughing Kitbags*, which went on sale earlier this year.

George (real name Ian) retired as a petty officer Air Engineering Technician after a service career which included Northern Ireland, the first Gulf War and Lebanon.

"Having spent most of my working life on the Jungly helicopter circuit I've been extremely fortunate to meet some tremendous officers and sailors alike," said George, who now works on Chinooks at Boscombe Down.

He added: "I've seen at first hand some incredibly funny incidents that have had me in stitches so after leaving the RN, I set about jotting down the funnier side of Jack at work and play.

"Amazingly, the manuscript was proof-read by a number of publishers and to my surprise and excitement I found one that was keen to publish."

The book was launched in Yeovil, where George lives, and is available through Waterstones or can be ordered online through Amazon or Authorhouse at about £12.88. Signed copies by the author can be purchased directly at www.ianditch.co.uk.

A portion of the profits will go to Help for Heroes.

■ *See review on page 45*

Charities join forces

NATIONAL Armed Forces Day in Cardiff saw two maritime charities unite – albeit temporarily, as the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust (RNBT) and Seafarers UK seized the opportunity of their adjacent pitches.

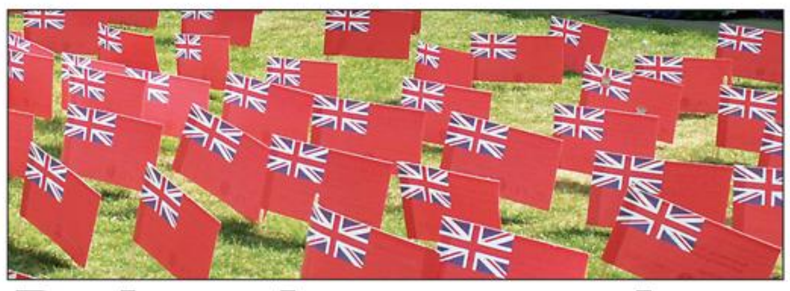
The RNBT were there to publicise its work to those who might benefit from their grants; and Seafarers were there as the fundraising charity for all nautical charities.

So it seemed a natural reaction for the staff to link the marquees for a united display, showing the public how closely the two charities work together.

Seafarers explained to visitors about their fundraising, and then RNBT told them about how this money would help their beneficiaries.

As one caller said: "What a good idea! I've just bought goods from one charity, which is going to help the one next door."

For more information on the RNBT, please visit www.rnbt.org.uk.



Red ensign remembers

ON SEPTEMBER 5, the Sailors' Society will plant hundreds of Red Ensign flags with messages commemorating the men and women of the merchant navy (*the 2009 memorial pictured above*).

Veterans will lay wreaths at the Merchant Navy Day Service in Trinity Gardens on London; and the flags will mark the lives lost at sea or the people currently serving away from home.

Contact the Sailors' Society for a free Red Ensign pack so that your flag can be planted along with the others to remember seafarers of yesterday and today.

To get your pack, email redensignflags@sailors-society.org or call 023 8051 5950.

Squadron rocks

THIS year is the 25th anniversary of the Gibraltar Squadron, but rather than celebrating with a large cake, LS 'Itchy' Iche and AB 'Sharpy' Sharp (*pictured right by Cpl Ralph Merry RAF*) marked the occasion by running 25 Rock Races on consecutive days.

The Rock Race is a three-mile road race which starts at the tower in the dockyard and finishes at the top cable car station, climbing some 1,600 feet along the route.

The race has been run by visiting ships' companies for many years, with race records being kept since the early 1980s. (The quickest time was set in 1983 at 17 minutes and 29 seconds and has yet to be broken.)

The Squadron's '25 Rock Races in 25 days' event ran until July and raised more than £2,000 for Help for Heroes.

Many other members of the wider Forces community took the opportunity to run up the Rock in the heat of a Gibraltarian summer – some were even said to have enjoyed it.

Other 25th anniversary events this year will include divisions, a ceremonial sunset and an official reception before the squadron enjoys a traditional Gibraltar run ashore.



Standing on top of the world

WE reported back in May that two friends of Lt John Thornton, a Royal Marines officer killed in Afghanistan in 2008, were setting out to climb Mount Everest to raise funds for a charity set up in his memory.

At the end of that month Matt Snook and Pete Sunnucks sent a text to friends and family saying simply "We've done it".

The pair had achieved their life-long ambition to stand on the summit of Mount Everest 'and touch the roof of the world'.

Matt, 24, and Pete, 27, are the first Help for Heroes team to reach the summit of Mount Everest. They set an ambitious target to raise £100,000 to be split equally between two charities, Help for Heroes and the John Thornton Young Achievers' Foundation.

This was set up to honour the life of John, a close friend of Matt and Pete. The charity aims to encourage and help young people to 'climb as high as they can dream,' an ideal which John wanted as his legacy.

Growing up in Bournemouth and attending the same Air Cadet Squadron in Ferndown, Dorset, Matt and John shared the same aspirations, to join the Royal Marines and one day climb Mount Everest.

They met Pete in the Air Training Corps and became lifelong friends, sharing a passion for the great outdoors. Over the years the bonds strengthened, which helped them cope with their loss. Before departing for Everest Pete said to his friends "This climb is for John".

Weeks after John's death, whilst studying for his finals at Swansea University, Matt received orders to deploy to Afghanistan as a reservist with 45 Commando RM.

Months later, Matt found himself serving on the front line. This seven-month deployment confirmed his desire to sign up to the RM full time.

On his return Matt together with Pete set about working on their Everest Expedition, to do their utmost to help the heroes on the front line and carry John's legacy to the top of the world.

Throughout his journey to the top of the world Matt wore John's climbing harness, in honour of his friend. But at one point early on in the expedition Matt's dreams lay hanging in the balance.

Less than two weeks before the precious summit weather window, and only days after reaching base camp, it was touch and go as to whether Matt would complete the climb at all.

He had been casevac'd to hospital in Kathmandu with a suspected case of pneumonia, other complications and "one of the worst stomach bugs I've ever experienced".

Despite a dark couple of days for Matt, alone in a foreign hospital and Pete clawing his way up to the legendary North Col head-wall uncertain of Matt's condition and an anxious time for friends and family back home, all were overjoyed that after some medication, rest and gentle persuasion of the doctors involved, Matt was declared medically fit and allowed to continue with the expedition

Out of 19 climbers who began the expedition, only four finished it.

Following their return to the UK Matt and Pete have been continuing to fundraise for the two causes, Pete has been progressing his application for a place at Sandhurst and Matt is awaiting confirmation of a place on Young Officer Training at Lympstone, following in John's footsteps to become an RM officer.

To find out more about the climb and to donate go to www.everestforheroes.com/

ssafa in brief

■ SSAFA Ted, the furry ambassador for the tri-Service charity, has been visiting HMS Belfast, in London, to mark SSAFA's 125th anniversary.

So far the intrepid bear has been on a trip around the US taking in the Grand Canyon, Yosemite National Park and the fleshpots of Las Vegas.

Coming back to Blighty, he was lucky enough to join cadets on the official RAF flypast of Buckingham Palace, to mark the Queen's official birthday in June.

Now those jolly jaunts are over his next tour of duty will be visiting the troops in Afghanistan.

Ted comes from a large family of SSAFA bears who are available to buy for £25 at www.ssafastore.co.uk with all proceeds going to SSAFA.

The bears are 12.6-inches in height and come with a bronze SSAFA cap badge on their beret, commemorative dog tags and a special 125 tour badge. The shoulders of their combat jackets carry the charity's anniversary dates, 1885 and 2010.

■ FAMILIES who have lost relatives during the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan met in Edinburgh to remember them at a two-day conference run by SSAFA's Support Group for Bereaved Families.

The group of parents, partners, children and brothers and sisters wore t-shirts which carried the words 'Honouring the Fallen' and a picture of their relative when they visited Edinburgh Castle to pay their respects at the Scottish National War Memorial.

The support group has members all over the UK and moves its events around the country to give everybody who wants to an opportunity to attend.

It also helps families exchange practical information and advice about repatriation ceremonies, next-of-kin issues and inquests.

■ SSAFA is working with Kent Police to help reduce the number of Armed Forces personnel who end up in prison or in the criminal justice system.

Current research estimates that one in ten of the prison population is made up of former military people.

Kent Police are the first police force in the country to address the problem and are working with SSAFA to begin a custody project.

Custody sergeants will ask detained people if they are ex-military as part of a pre-release risk assessment. If so, they will provide them with a Military Support Leaflet and liaise with SSAFA to provide a caseworker.

Gloucester sailors rally to help

TRAVELLING the world's oceans is sometimes not enough. At least that's been the conviction of two sailors in HMS Gloucester, LET(ME) Dougy Clutterbuck and ET(ME) Olly Buckland (*pictured right*), who during the ship's Falklands' deployment last year hatched an extraordinary idea to raise money for charity.

As *Navy News* went to press, they were setting off for the gruelling 2010 Mongol Rally from England to Mongolia, one of the poorest countries in the world, to fundraise for charities.

Along with three other teams, the two sailors set off on their journey a third of the way around the earth, and in a car that has an engine of just one litre.

Starting from England, Spain and Italy, the rally finishes in Ulaanbaatar about four weeks afterwards. It's between 8,000 and 10,000 miles, depending which route the teams take.

"We are crossing the two biggest land-locked countries in the world, so we need to be fully prepared for survival in a way that we haven't been used to before," said Olly.

He added: "We have done a lot of research, prepared for mountains, deserts and dirt-tracks, but some people are yet to be convinced that we'll make it!"



The team intends to raise money for five charities, including the Christina Noble Children's Foundation, which helps Mongolian children, many of whom live without families in manholes and on the streets of the capital, Ulaanbaatar.

The other four charities are YMCA Fairthorne Group, Riding for the Disabled, The Spring Centre and The Willow Trust – the latter two are affiliated with HMS Gloucester.

The team has had strong backing from the ship, with the CO and other heads of department encouraging sponsorship.

You can follow their progress on www.gcgb.org.uk

rnrmc in brief

■ A GROUP of Initial Fleet Time Officer Cadets from Britannia Royal Naval College raced HMS Albion across the Atlantic, raising money for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC).

The cadets started the challenge in May and were given seven weeks to cover more than 3,000 miles – the distance from her base port to Norfolk Virginia – before Albion reached Norfolk Virginia at the end of June.

■ IAIN Edgar and John-Joe Reilly are two Royal Navy Medical Officers deployed in the Arabian Gulf.

They have come up with the idea of 'Cycling back to Pompey' during their trip – the intention being for them both to have completed the entire 3,264-mile distance from Bahrain to Portsmouth to raise funds for the RNRMC.

■ TEENAGERS Toby Robson, Marcus Colville, Ollie Doeutil and Nat Jones completed a sponsored walk from Fort William to Dalwhinnie across the Scottish Highlands via Ben Nevis and raised more than £2,200 for the RNRMC.

■ MEMBERS from the Intermediate Command Staff Course (Maritime) hosted a charity horse racing night at JSCSC Shrivenham with a *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* theme.

Each race represented a part of the knights' quest with them facing many of the perils depicted in the original film. The event raised over £330 for the RNRMC.

■ RNRMC grants include:

- HMS Raleigh, climbing wall, £26,583;
- HMS Sultan, climbing wall, £20,000;
- CTCRM Lympstone, stadium flood lights, £40,000:
- RSR, equipment, £6,690;
- Bickleigh Saddle Club, installation of new drainage system and new riding surface, £13,343;
- RAF Digby (tri-service bid), new childcare centre, £22,000,
- Union Jack Club, (tri-service bid), central heating system, £6,000,
- in addition to £120,000 half-yearly grant to ships, submarines and RM units for period May 1 – September 30.

Gannet team soars to new heights

IN 23 hours and 40 minutes, three intrepid staff from HMS Gannet's Search and Rescue team scaled Scotland, England and Wales's highest peaks.

For CPO Jim Bridge, PO Tony Leggott, and LMA Jade Whitby, the race to climb the three mountains – Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon – in a single 24-hour period was a real challenge.

Jim and Tony, who both work in the unit's Met office, and Gannet's medic Jade were joined on their adventure by LA Andrew 'Spud' Murphy, whose job it was to drive the team to the various mountains and ensure that they were fed and watered.

The time for the expedition starts from the base of Ben Nevis and finishes at the base of Snowdon when all the team members have climbed all three mountains.

And the team's determination helped them to secure more than £600 for Clic Sargent charity, which cares for children with cancer, and is one of HMS Gannet's chosen charities.

Team leader Jim said: "The day started at 4.15pm with a steady climb up Ben Nevis, the wind was calm and the sun was shining.

"But Scafell Pike was totally different.

"We started at 3.30am and it was dark, very windy, rainy, and the cloud base was down to 200 metres which made navigation difficult."

"All three of us were glad to get to the top of Snowdon at 2pm, but then had to race back down to the bottom in under two hours and 15 minutes to make it within the time target."

The team eventually finished 20 minutes under 24 hours, having climbed Ben Nevis in four hours 40 minutes, Scafell Pike in four hours, and Snowdon in three hours 40 minutes.

Jim said: It was a real team effort, we all started cheerfully, but our hearts sank when we arrived at Wasdale and saw the bad weather.

"It's amazing, though, what a few slabs of chocolate and a couple of boiled sweets did to lift the team's spirits as we climbed Scafell Pike, knowing that Spud would be there at the end with a hot drink and a good hearty breakfast."



● *CPO Jim Bridge, PO Tony Leggott and LMA Jade Whitby (probably not in that order...) from HMS Gannet tackle Britain's highest peaks*



● *HMS Middleton's crew took on the Choke Point Challenge*

Middleton is no choke

HMS Middleton, currently serving as one of four mine countermeasures vessels in the Gulf, celebrated Armed Forces Day in her own way on June 26, with a Choke Point Challenge.

The aim was to run, cycle and row the 350 nautical mile distance of the choke points that she has sailed from Portsmouth to Bahrain, including the Strait of Gibraltar, Suez Canal, Bab el Mandeb and the Strait of Hormuz.

In terms of training, being at sea in a small ship presented its own challenges, with a severe shortage of space. Most sailors opted to use the upper-deck rowing machine or complete their circuit training on the sweepdeck while they were off-watch.

Temperatures on the upper deck frequently reached above 40°C, but nearly every member of the ship's company signed up to take part in some way, and by the end of a long day, the ship's company had completed 417.4 miles and raised more than £2,200 for the RNRMC.

To donate, please go to http://virginmoneygiving.com/team/HMSMIDDLETON

Submariners dig deep for cycle ride

TEN hardy submariners from HMS Vengeance cycled from their home base of Clyde on a 450-mile trip through Scotland and England to Suffolk to support a school in Bury St Edmunds.

Averaging 80 miles a day, the team crossed from west coast Faslane to east coast Peebles before turning south and heading for Hexham.

Then it was on to Ripon, Wisbech, and the final stretch to Bury St Edmunds, where they arrived on Armed Forces Day.

Lt Grant Bentley, who led the team, said: "Life goes at a slower pace in the deep, but the team trained hard for this run on exercise bikes on board during our last patrol.

"Life on the open road, though, offered more challenges than life on a submarine's exercise bike!" (*Although at least the bit around Wisbech was flat – Fenland Ed.*)

The ten-man team hoped to raise a substantial amount of money for Riverwalk School, for children with special educational needs.



● *A container ship in the Solent has a close call with the swimming Blackburn brothers*

Brothers' close encounter

OK, YOU'RE not going to meet a great white shark in the cold grey waters of the Solent, but there are enough challenges to bring about that awful feeling that 'this is the end of me.'

Like the huge lines of a Wallenius Walhelmsen container ship bearing down on you.

Grant Blackburn, a CPO avionics instructor at HMS Sultan, and his three brothers Nigel, Kyle and Austin, had the close encounter when they set out from Ryde, on the Isle of Wight, to swim to the Gosport and Fareham Inshore Rescue Service at Stokes Bay.

The four brothers set off in less than ideal conditions, wisely accompanied by two safety RIBs and four safety kayakers, and after a minor interruption from the passing container ship managed to reach their destination two hours later.

The brothers hope to raise £8,000 for the Bravehearts Charity to help Hampshire twins Brandon and Dillon, who were born with cerebral palsy.

Go to http://braveheartscharity.webeden.co.uk/ if you would like to donate.



Join us to commemorate the Year of the Seafarer at the Merchant Navy Day Service

5th September 2010 - Trinity Gardens, London

The **Sailors' Society** would be delighted if you could join us and plant a Red Ensign Flag bearing your message of remembrance for a loved one, friend or colleague, in recognition of merchant seafarers of past conflicts and seafarers currently away at sea.

Carrying 95% of the world's goods, seafarers today work in a harsh and dangerous environment, exposed to the rigours of the sea much like their comrades in wartime. We provide practical help, emotional and spiritual support to the world's 1.2 million seafarers.

Contact us now for your free Red Ensign pack so that your flag can be planted with others to commemorate seafarers of yesterday and today.

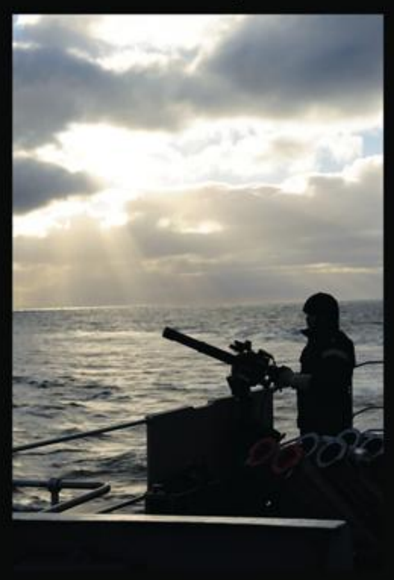
Email: *red-ensignflags@sailors-society.org*
Tel: *+44 (0)23 8051 5950.*

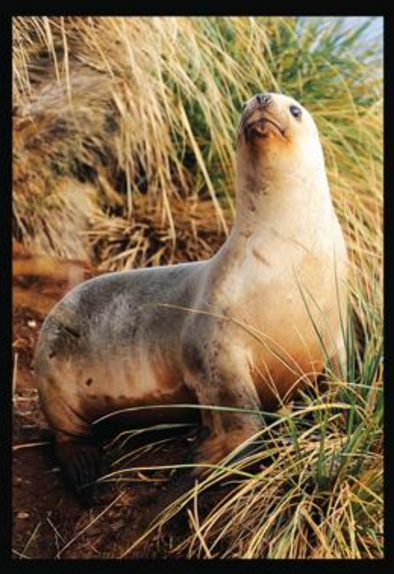
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YEAR OF THE SEAFARER

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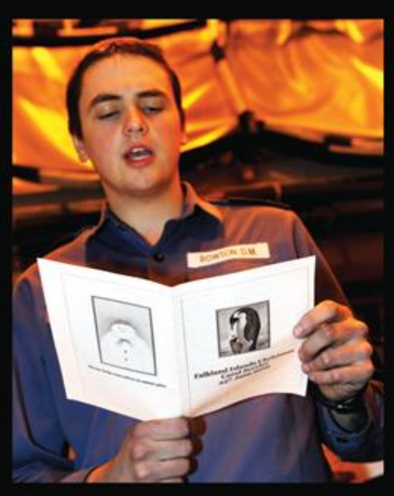
Pies, pizza and Portland











FIRE on a ship is never pleasant.

Fire in a Type 23 galley with the proximity of the main engine spaces and heavy electrical equipment, could be a recipe (sorry) for disaster.

So good job we practise for it. Here, HMS Portland's ET(ME) Sean Fitzsimmons is fully suited up and ready to tackle the blaze with his shipmates.

Yes, it's all fun when the staff of FOST are onboard. And there's no escaping the exacting inspectors of the Flag Officer Sea Training.

Not 9,000 miles from home. Not even at Christmas.

Christmas?

With the terrain blanketed by snow, the frigate's ship's company in Portland's hangar for 'FIXmas' – Falkland Islands Christmas – on June 25. Well, what else is there to do in the middle of winter?

So there were decorations, carols, mince pies, and some surprise presents courtesy of 'secret Santa'.

FIXmas was just one wintry activity. There was an obligatory snowman standing guard next to the gangway at Mare Harbour, while CO Cdr Mike Knott and his heads of department headed to the islands' capital for the 'Mad Winter Swim' on the shortest day.

Dressed in utterly unsuitable tropical uniforms the officers joined some 50 locals braving the freezing eight-foot surf for a (very) quick dip, spending long enough in the chilly waters to earn a 'certificate of lunacy'.

Midwinter in the Falklands isn't all fun, however. The snowfall made storing ship during a spell alongside at the island's bleak military port 'interesting'... but at least the frozen goods didn't melt.

And the FOSTies?

Well, the Devonport-based organisation dispatches a mobile team around the globe to ensure ship's companies are at the top of their game while on deployment.

A 12-strong team descended on Portland in the Falklands... and promptly arranged all the mayhem ships can expect off Plymouth: fire, flood, disaster relief, terrorist attack, replenishment at sea (courtesy of the islands' military tanker RFA Black Rover).

The simulated galley fire brought the ship to emergency stations to be able to deal with the blaze effectively.

With the 'fire' out, the ship's company dealt with a 'quickdraw' exercise fending off a fast attack craft.

It takes a speed boat traveling at 50kts little more than a minute to cover half a mile, so there's not much time for a ship's company to react. They have to be quick on the draw, hence the exercise's name.

More sedate gunnery came courtesy of floating targets (ie the killer tomato) to give the upper deck gun crews a chance to test their marksmanship with the 30mm cannon, Minigun, and GPMGs.

"When patrolling we are constantly poised to respond to incidents," explained AB(WS) 'Rosie' Rosenbaum. "Exercises like these keep us sharp, one day it might be the real thing."

The FOSTies spent a week aboard Portland, ending their top-up training in traditional fashion: a Thursday War.

They went away from the Falklands more than happy with the way the ship was working.

Other visitors to Portland were rather less exacting, if no less interested in Portland. Robert Hannigan, Director General of Defence and Intelligence at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and Capt Mark Durkin, Captain Mine Warfare, Fishery Protection and Diving both received an overview of the Type 23's mission in these parts; Capt Durkin was in the islands to visit the islands' patrol ship HMS Clyde, which is part of his 'domain'.

With this being winter in the Southern Hemisphere, Portland has been conducting reassurance visits to remote communities peppered around the archipelago. Many Falklanders decamp to the 'metropolis' of Stanley for the winter, but not all.

The owner of New Island Settlement (at the very west of West Falkland) asked the ship to check on the handful of properties on his isle to see how they were faring against the elements. The sailors were able to assure him all was well.

The ship has just completed her two-week mid-deployment maintenance period which has allowed some of the sailors to head out and about (weather permitting; the road to Stanley is regularly closed courtesy of snow and high winds).

But you don't always need a 4x4 to experience the delights of the Falklands.

460 Port Troop offered to take some of the sailors on a pleasure cruise... in a landing craft.

It headed off to beaches around East Cove, allowing sailors to get up close and personal with seals, penguins and other Falklands wildlife.

The landing craft made access to these remote spots possible, but in most cases the Portlanders had to wade ashore.

When the road to Stanley was open, some sailors conducted a battlefield tour of Tumbledown, scene of fierce fighting in the final stages of the 1982 conflict with Argentina.

Less adventurous souls headed as far as Portland's hangar and the 'Lakeside Darts Championships', won by LMEA 'Ken' Dodd. Diddy celebrate? Diddy ever...

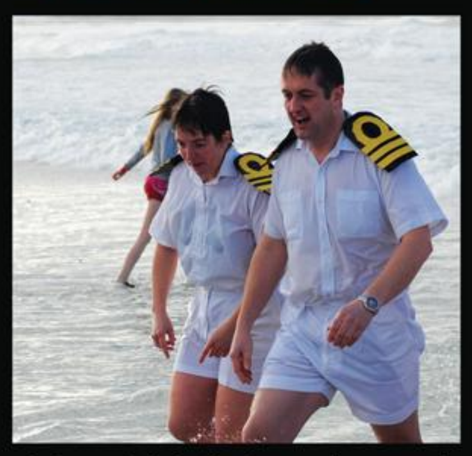
After expending all that energy, you're going to need some grub.

Enter Wrenominoes Pizza. The 26-woman mess offered to cook for the rest of the ship's company (for a fee, naturally).

AB Clare Brewer and Std Sophie Williams took orders over the phone while their mess mates did the catering services (preparation) and ABs Yorke and Manning provided the catering services (delivery).

With duffs and side dishes of garlic bread (it's the future, I've tasted it...), the pizza night raised some £160 for the ship's charities.

Apparently CPO Scott maintains the six duffs he ordered were for his mate Ron, Later Ron...









pictures: la(phot) simmo simpson, frpu east

All eyes on Auriga

IF LOOKS could kill...

And knowing Royal, they probably could.

A fully-cammed green beret of 3 Commando Brigade puts on his best war face (well, war eyes) as the amphibious element of the Auriga 2010 deployment gets down to business.

The RN's biggest gathering of force of the year is split into two distinct groups: carrier strike led by Ark Royal (*see overleaf*) and amphibious strike led by HMS Albion with HMS Ocean and RFA Lyme Bay in tow (not literally...).

After crossing the Atlantic, the amphibious group mustered in Norfolk Naval Base in Virginia – just in time for July 4 celebrations.

Some sailors and marines decided to make for Washington (a good 200 miles away) to watch Independence Day celebrations...

...those less adventurous (including Ocean's ship's cat – more from him later) made for Virginia Beach (two dozen miles away).

Whether in the capital or by the coast, there were high temperatures (30˚C), fireworks and music; indeed, the Virginia waterfront was lined with bands and entertainers as the night sky was momentarily lit by a million and one flashes.

Sadly, you can't enjoy July 4 forever. Or for more than one day.

So it was back to sea and a short hop (200-plus miles) to the waters off North Carolina and the swamplands which serve as one of the principal training grounds of the US Marine Corps, Camp Lejeune.

Also in these waters now was Ark's task group, which had completed its transit from Nova Scotia.

So there was the rare – and impressive – sight of a mid-ocean encounter for three of Britain's five capital ships (only Illustrious and Bulwark weren't present; they're in refit).

"This is the Royal Navy coming together with very many moving parts – it's been a while since we have executed anything like this," said Carrier Strike Group – and overall task force – commander Cdre Simon Ancona.

"However, we have the assets and we are in ideal exercise areas to be able to re-generate the know how of how to conduct operations like these."

Auriga is intended to test the ability of a Royal Navy task force to respond to a crisis in an intense, humid environment where the enemy poses numerous threats.

The climax of Auriga (happening right about the time *Navy News* was going to press) was the end of a three-week exercise with the USS Kearsarge battlegroup.

The Kearsarge is a sort of Albion-Ocean-Ark Royal hybrid; she's an assault ship/helicopter carrier/strike carrier.

She's going through her pre-deployment training – COMPosiTe Unit training EXercise, commonly referred to by the Septics as COMPTUEX (think of it as a 'mega BOST' or Joint Warrior-esque test).

Like their British counterparts, US planners impose real-world scenarios on fictitious lands. We name these fabled lands after colours (Brownia, Mustardia) or we bastardise historical titles (Dragonia, Caledonia), the Americans use precious or semi-precious gems and call their playground the Treasure Coast.

Now the Kearsarge is big (40,000 tons) – although Albion, visiting US sailors commented, has wider 'p-ways' (we think they mean passageways) – and she's scarily potent.

Aside from the punch of more than 50 aircraft (five Harriers, 42 Sea Knights and half a dozen Seahawks), the Kearsarge carries up to 1,900 US Marines.

The latter are increasingly being carried into battle by a new steed, the Osprey tilt-rotor (half helicopter, half standard propeller-driven aircraft) – as the Auriga force is discovering.

The Ospreys have been moving around the force, paying inaugural visits to Albion, Ocean and Ark Royal (one visited Ark's sister Illustrious the last time she came across the Pond a couple of years back).

Osprey is not only an impressive (some might also say ungainly) looking machine, but also adds significant punch to the party.

Although it can only carry as many troops as a Junglie Sea King (two dozen), the Osprey can fly twice as fast and twice as far.

"To embark the Osprey to HMS Albion is a real treat," said the assault ship's aviation officer, Lt Giles Bradford.

"The various challenges involved have been embraced by all involved in flying on board."

More typical transport awaits the men of 3 Commando for most of their journeys from ship to shore: Albion's Landing Craft Utility (big ones, capable of carrying Challenger 2 tanks); Landing Craft Vehicle and Personnel (smaller ones); and Sea King Mk4 of 845 and 846 NAS.

And there's quite a lot for these methods of transport to deposit in the exercise areas of North Carolina.

Aside from the men, there's a fair bit of kit: Viking armoured vehicles (up to three at a time can squeeze on an LCU); 105mm field guns (courtesy of 29 Commando Regiment RA); combat engineers; the communications/signals kit of 30 Commando IX Group.

Some of the movements, particularly in the early stages, were conducted by day.

But if you're really going to 'insert' yourself on hostile soil, you're going to have to insert by night.

In Ocean's case, more than 500 Royal Marines were carried ashore in the dark by helicopter and landing craft (*some are pictured below making their way to the Mighty O's forward lift*).

It was, according to the ship's cat (he's a regular blogger...) "a fantastic sight that made my fur stand up with pride".

Ashore, the green berets found the Camp Lejeune topography and climate 'interesting'.

The terrain is rough with thick undergrowth – jungle-like in places – interspersed with wide open arid grasslands with little or no cover from the enemy or the sun...

Despite such an unforgiving environment, Lejeune offers training which is, in the words of Lt Col Matt Stovin-Bradford, CO of 30 Commando IX Group, "absolutely first class".

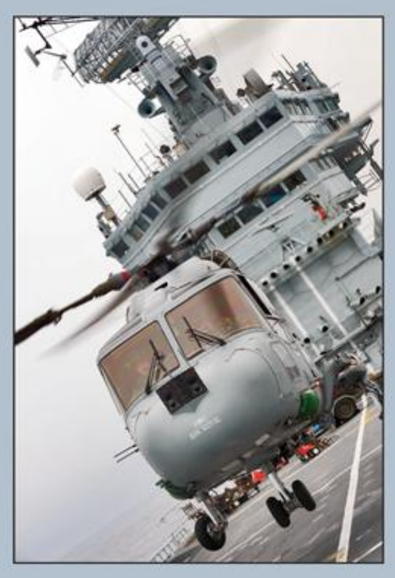
Other elements of the brigade were busy on the ranges firing everything from small arms to the 105mm guns from Plymouth-based 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery, and green-bereted combat engineers scoured the landscape for (practice) improvised explosive devices of the type commonly used by the Taleban in Afghanistan.



pictures: la(phots) luron wright, hms albion, and guy pool, hms ocean

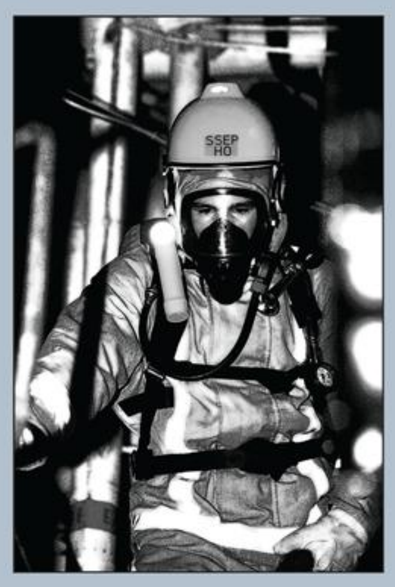












‘If you want a task

THEY’RE obviously not superstitious aboard Britain’s flagship.

E J Smith on the bridge. In these waters? In this weather?

Luckily it’s Lieutenant, rather than Captain, Smith. And there’s no sign of an iceberg.

In fact there’s no sign of anything.

From the bridge of HMS Ark Royal you can just about see the Phalanx on the forecastle, *writes Richard Hargreaves*.

At regular intervals the ship’s horn bellows across Halifax Harbour.

“Everyone needs to be on the lookout for a fishing boat,” Lt Smith says firmly.

“Can’t even see the fo’c’s’le,” a rating mutters under his breath.

There’s fog 160 days of the year in Canada’s great east coast port.

It was like this yesterday too. A case of *déjà vu*. Or rather *déjà non vu*.

Ark’s Commander, Cdr Rob Bellfield, makes a ‘breast stroke’ gesture, as if he were pushing curtains apart.

If only it were that simple.

Or maybe it is that simple.

For a couple of hours later, the mist has parted. It reveals a fine day on North America’s Eastern Seaboard and a shoreline akin to Cornwall or Devon.

Within an hour, Harrier GR9s are racing up Ark’s ski ramp.

Auriga 2010 can resume in earnest.

IN A few days Britain’s flagship deployment of the year – led, appropriately by her flagship Ark Royal, plus escorts Sutherland, Liverpool and USS Barry, supported by RFA Fort George – will reach its climax.

Ark’s battle group converges with HMS Albion’s amphibious force and a task group focused around USS Kearsarge (a combination of Ark/Albion/Ocean... but twice the size of Britain’s largest warship) for a super-sized (could it be anything else this side of the Atlantic?) Joint Warrior-esque exercise spread over three weeks.

Everything so far on this four-and-a-half-month deployment has worked: Auriga has been a succession of exercises – typically ten days in duration.

The emphasis has been on strike from the sea, courtesy of the Harriers arranged on Ark Royal’s flight deck.

But pretty much everything else you can expect to encounter in war at sea – submarine hunting, air defence, fighting off fast attack craft, replenishing, rescuing – has been thrown into the Auriga mix.

And there are things you don’t do every day. Host a dozen US Marine Corps AV8B Harriers. Or try to sink the entire carrier strike group.

The force decided it would play out a Falklands scenario. Air attack. Heavy damage. Missiles exploding. Strafing. Fires. Flood. Basically, “a bad day at Black Rock” in the words of the carrier group’s senior marine engineer Cdr Paul Carroll.

Ark Royal ended up saving Liverpool, towing the Type 42, while the Barry crew were sent across to Sutherland to clear a wrecked compartment – one of numerous rescue teams transferred around the fleet to save the day, while 14 ‘casualties’ were moved to Ark for treatment in her sick bay.

Pretty standard fare. Or rather not.

“I’ve never done this in my career – not as a task group,” says Cdr Carroll. “It’s fantastic to do, really pushing ourselves to the limit.

“The objective of the task group is to deliver decisive force from land, sea and air, take any retaliation on the chin and continue to fight and win.”

The damage control day taught some big lessons... and some little ones.

“Sutherland’s hit. Barry comes to the rescue,” Cdr Carroll explains. “Except that when they get across to Sutherland, the Barry rescue teams realise that their equipment runs on different voltage – they need to bring their generators across as well.”

AURIGA

But it’s these little things which might be the difference between life and death.

“You cannot just sail across the Atlantic and ‘plug in’,” stresses Liverpool’s CO Cdr Ollie Hutchinson.

“Task group operations with our allies need investment, you need ships to go away for a fairly extended period to iron out the wrinkles and fine-tune the machine.”

Some things take a bit of getting used to. Language, mainly.

Take something breaking aboard a ship. A piece of kit out of order.

In RN terminology it’s an OpDef – operational defect.

To Americans it’s a casualty. After an afternoon of gunnery practice, the USS Barry proudly reported ‘no casualties’. “No casualties? I should think not,” says Lt Cdr Simon Chapman of the Carrier Strike Group staff, picturing some form of carnage in the gun bay on the American destroyer. They meant, of course, that nothing was broken.

The ability to understand the Americans (and *vice versa*, naturally) goes far beyond language, of course.

It’s the ability to share information, data, between different ships of different nationalities, different classes, different equipment.

It’s the ability of Merlin A to prosecute a submarine contact using data collected by Aircraft B, passed to USS C and sent to the helicopter in real time.

“If there’s anyone in the world we need to be able to ‘plug and play’ with, it’s the USA,” says Commander UK Carrier Strike Group Cdre Simon Ancona. “We need to be able to fight with our friends when and where we need to.”

When Auriga began in April, Cdre Ancona talked of a trip to the gym – America’s east coast is “the gym of choice for working out your carrier”. And the Americans know how to work out carriers. They have 22 of various types. We have three.

“All around there are US carriers pumping iron,” the commodore says. “We’re in good company.”

Now rewind the clock 12 months.

Ark was a building site in Portsmouth Naval Base coming to the end of a multi-million pound overhaul. HMS Liverpool too.

“This time last year, we were in dry dock,” says ‘wings’ – Commander Air – Cdr Rocky Salmon. “Twelve months later, Ark Royal’s gone through a quantum leap.”

It’s not just the fact that a year ago Ark was a building site, it’s the fact that she spent most of the Noughties as a helicopter carrier.

Her sailors joined Illustrious to observe the way Lusty worked with jets and helicopters to pick up tips; Ark will return the favour when her sister emerges from refit.

Through the autumn of 2009 and spring of 2010 – volcanic ash clouds, abortive rescues of stranded holidaymakers from the continent notwithstanding – Ark Royal’s been working towards this day.

“Auriga’s the culmination of everything we’ve been aiming towards, the icing on the cake,” says Cdr Salmon.

The arrival of the US Marine Corps was particularly tasty.

As befits their reputation, the Corps like to live on the edge and do things with a bang, like refuelling four jets simultaneously on Ark’s flight deck.

814

“My chief’s been in 25 years,” says Ark’s flight deck officer Lt Paul ‘Mo’ Morris. “He’s been waiting all his career for a chance like that. That’s how much it means to the guys. They’ve come through everything shining.”

815

Cdr Salmon nods.

“Carrier aviation isn’t just about a few aircraft on the flight deck,” he adds. “It’s about the people we’ve trained. The aircrew. The ground crew. The guys on the flight deck. The engineers. The people in the galley. Carrier aviation involves everybody.”

NOW it’s easy to be bedazzled by the capital ships (hence the rather unflattering ‘flattop news’ tag with which our publication is occasionally saddled).

So what have the other vessels in the Auriga force been up to?

Well, we’re glad you asked...

Rarely out of Ark Royal’s sight is her trusty guardian HMS Liverpool.

“You’re always in the same body of water as Ark Royal,” says Lt Jamie Weller, the destroyer’s deputy weapons engineer officer, “and she’s always within our protective bubble.”

For Liverpool, which has shared aerial defensive duties with the USS Barry – “our air defending brother” in the words of her CO Cdr Ollie Hutchinson – the deployment has been the first chance to flex her muscles since emerging from refit last year.

Technology means that Liverpool (designed in the late 60s, built in the late 70s) can share combat information “instantly and seamlessly” with the Barry (designed in the late 80s, built in the early 90s...).

“Auriga’s challenging, but it’s also thoroughly enjoyable, and it’s a delight to take my sailors on a great deployment,” Cdr Hutchinson adds.

“I want them to take home memories which will last a lifetime – for some this is their first visit to the USA or Canada.”

But before you think this is a jolly to North America, let me stop you there.

“I don’t think anyone perhaps gauged the tempo we’d be working at,” says Lt Cdr Stu Lear, Liverpool’s logistics officer. “But then you need to operate as if it’s real.”

That’s something reinforced by his commanding officer.

“It’s very nice to be part of a fleet review in Canada,” says Cdr Ollie Hutchinson. “But you have a constant feeling that someone, somewhere is fighting – and dying – for their country, especially in Afghanistan.”

WHILE Liverpool has largely been tied to Ark on a leash, HMS Sutherland has enjoyed a rather freer rein.

Before heading off on Auriga she loosed 28 (count ’em) Seawolf missiles to test the upgrade to the air defence system (Sutherland’s the first to get it), knocking out targets racing over the waves at just 20ft – just as the upgrade demanded.

That boost, plus Sonar 2087 and a 30mm automated gun makes the ship “Britain’s top-end 23” her weapons engineer officer Lt Cdr Paul O’Shaughnessy says proudly.

Although the Type 23 has been doing her own thing occasionally, it’s only to a limited extent. A key part of Auriga is to test the logistics chain of a task group to see how best to sustain a large naval force 3,000 miles from home.

“The whole point of sea power is that we can go anywhere we are ordered and are ready to roll when we arrive,” says Cdr Paul Carroll, responsible for overseeing the material state of the entire carrier strike group.

“We have to be self-sustainable as much as possible, relying on our own resources.”

One of Ark’s aircraft lifts broke. Oddly, there’s not an aircraft lift-esque Kwik Fit in the mid-Atlantic. Ark’s engineers fashioned replacement parts. Lift’s working. Job’s a good ’un. “Not one hour’s flying was lost,” Cdr Carroll adds with pride.

LOGISTICS are perhaps not considered sexy – certainly not as sexy as dropping torpedoes or top bombing from Harriers.

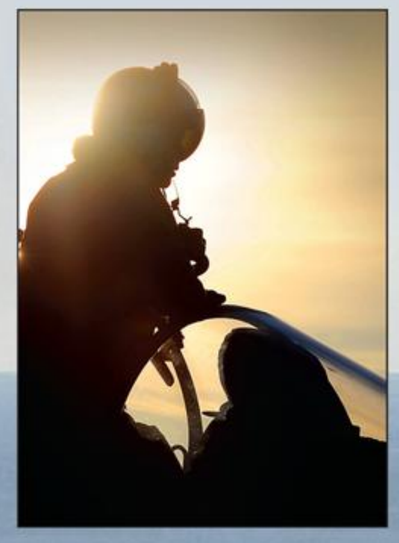
Or maybe they are.

By the time she returns to Devonport in mid-August, Sutherland will have RAS-ed roughly twice a week, far more than usual.

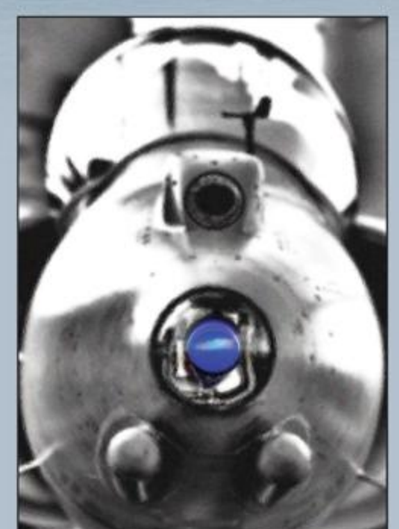
Things typical have been replenished: food, fuel. And not so typical things: ammunition – the 23 hasn’t topped up on weaponry at sea in a long time. Plus a stern RAS.

And then there was towing the Barry. “It’s something not done very often and something which demands the efforts of the whole ship’s company,” says deputy logistics officer Lt Vivienne Masson.











force, we can deliver it"

The whole ship's company?

"Once it's wet, the tow rope is incredibly heavy and it has to be hauled in manually," Lt Masson explains. "It needs everyone who's not otherwise engaged." (The steward setting the table for lunch in the wardroom nods his head repeatedly with a grimace.)

For such efforts there are rewards. One city especially seems to have fired Sutherland's imagination.

Halifax? New York? Washington? Norfolk, perhaps?

Baltimore.

Not necessarily top of most people's tourist destinations, but the port was the venue for Sutherland as she hosted British defence firms.

"The reception was just fantastic," says Lt Masson. "The woman who ran a water taxi service organised an informal dinner party, people invited us into their homes. All because we were British military."

While Sutherland was showcasing British industry keen to sell their wares, some things are priceless.

Like the entire ship's company of one of the world's biggest – and most famous – warships saluting a few thousands tons of sovereign British territory.

As Sutherland entered Norfolk, legendary carrier USS Enterprise – the Big E – was making her way out.

Aboard the Type 23 was the task force commander. His seniority meant the flat-top had to pay its respects. A good thousand American sailors lined the sides of the carrier…

"Imagine that," beams CO Cdr John Payne with a Cheshire-cat grin. "Normally I'm saluting everyone…"

It's not the only time our American cousins have taken a keen interest in Sutherland.

All the way across the Pond, and once off the Eastern Seaboard, the frigate has been pinging her Sonar 2087.

It can be used passively – ie simply listening for submarines. But such is the range (vastly improved over its predecessor 2031) of the new(ish) low-frequency sonar that the active button has been flicked on.

American VIPs and anti-submarine experts have been mightily impressed by the combination of 2087 and Sutherland's Merlin – "a potent punch for the task group," says Cdr Payne…

… and a succession of submarines – France's Perle, America's Dallas and Boise, Canada's Cornerbrook, Peru's BAP Angamos (aka Dangermouse) – have all voiced their discomfort at being pinged.

IT'S not just the Type 23 applying pressure to the deeps; the Flying Tigers are here en masse too.

The entire 814 Naval Air Squadron – all 138 men and women and five Merlins – have deployed on Auriga, split between Fort George and Ark Royal. Back home in Culdrose there is nothing. The lights are off. No-one is home.

"And that's a good thing," says the Flying Tigers' CO Cdr Darran Goldsmith.

"Anti-submarine warfare is a skill which is very perishable. You have to keep doing it. It's not something you can turn on at the snap of a finger."

It's not just the toys 814 have been given to play with that's made Auriga useful, but the playground.

"Back in the UK, it's north-west Scotland or the Plymouth exercise areas. We know the airspace, we know the waters, we know the support we can rely on. But not here," explains Cdr Goldsmith.

So why, two decades after the end of the Cold War and seven after Dönitz's U-boats stalked the Atlantic, are we still hunting boats?

"Submarine warfare's growing," says Cdr Goldsmith emphatically. "More nations than ever possess boats. There's everything out there – from boats capable of wiping out cities to one-man midget submarines and drug runners' submersibles. And we've got to be able to find them."

Non-pingers mock 'awfully slow warfare' – "It's not slow, it's very quick," Cdr Goldsmith points out in a flash. "Anyway, other pilots should be interested in ASW. If we don't do our job, they don't have anything to land on."

He has a point…

There's more to pingers than, er, pinging. This trip, 814 has done everything from ferrying passengers and supplies around to force protection duties and search and rescue stand-by.

"We do everything," says the Flying Tigers' enthusiastic CO. "You can't beat it. How can people not think it's Gucci?"

NOT everyone welcomes the Merlins' presence aboard, mind you. Where Merlin goes, so too its supporting test system – a wonderful piece of diagnostics kit which checks whether things on the £40m helicopter are working as they should be.

Wonderful as long as you don't have to move it. It's not a permanent fixture aboard Ark, but goes where the Merlins go. In this case, it was disassembled methodically at Culdrose under the direction of PO Colin Hone… then methodically reassembled in a workshop just off Ark's hangar, again under the senior rate's direction.

The result is five racks of turquoise grey boxes packed with gadgetry, linked by more cables than at a satellite TV convention.

It's one of more than half a dozen workshops and annexes hidden away on the edge of the hangar. You wouldn't ordinarily notice them, but they're the backbone of flying operations – sorting out radios, batteries, avionics, hydraulics, fixing parts or making replacements.

The hangar itself is littered with 250 gallon fuel tanks for the Harriers, pallets and containers featuring all manner of equipment – 1(F) Squadron brought five artics' worth, 814 three.

And again, it's all good.

"The guys have been aboard for say 15 months and come through refit," says the carrier's air engineer officer Cdr Rob Mallinson. "They were desperate to get back into flying operations again, getting busy."

The Navy genie has granted them their wish.

"No doubt about it, this trip has been fab for working with all the different types of aircraft," says PO Paddy Ashe, hangar PO, a man who loves his job.

"We are very lucky in our branch. We look after each other – it's a hotbed of comradeship and high morale."

There is, he says, a two-year waiting list to become a naval airman; such interest in the branch is particularly welcome given that in under five years we're going to need a lot of handlers.

Like everything involving British carriers – principally Illustrious – over the past three or four years, Auriga has one eye on the present and one eye on the future.

The present is making sure Ark and her task group are at the top of their game and can work with the Americans. The future is preparing the way for Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales.

"Many of the guys and girls on here will serve in the Queen Elizabeth class. Every week at sea, every exercise we do has to be a step towards the future carrier," says Capt Clink.

Inwardly, too, Ark's made great strides towards the future.

It is, shamefully, seven years since the *Navy News* team spent any concerted time aboard the ship, and hence seven years since I visited her ops room, a dark, dingy affair filled with matelots staring at mainly monochrome screens.

My, how things have changed. Lighting (well, half lighting – too much light, explains senior warfare officer Lt Cdr Stu Yates, "takes away that ops room feeling and concentration."). Flat screens. Oversized TV/computer screens. Colour screens. Still filled with matelots, of course.

"The layout, the set-up, the equipment, the light, it's all right up to scratch," says CPO(AWT) 'Terry' Tinson proudly.

"Ark Royal might be 25 years old, but inside she's bang up to date."

Among the new gadgets they can play with is the Rover downlink – it's a real-time feed of footage from the camera fitted to a Merlin or sniper pod on a Harrier.

Think *Police, Camera, Action*, but rather than waiting for the helicopter or jet to return to download the footage, the ops room can monitor, analyse and advise on things as they happen.

How good is it? Well, from five miles away you can see the heat rising from the funnel of HMS Sutherland and a sailor on the upper deck walking around in a white shirt. From 35 miles, you can quite clearly make out the pennant number on RFA Fort George.

Hi-tech naval kit is not the preserve of either the Americans or RN, however.

The Canadians possess Hammerheads, remote-controlled speed boats capable of 25kts which simulate fast-attack craft/suicide bombers. What's really cool is that you can use live ammo against them. Ark's guns, and especially those of her Lynx, sent two Hammerheads to Davy Jones' Locker.

"It's really realistic training," says Lt Cdr Yates. "These boats cost thousands, but the Canadians didn't mind us blowing them up."

Which is nice.

It is also very good practice. A warship has just 71 seconds to respond if a suicide bomber closes within half a mile at 50kts and only around ten to engage said vessel if it really is a threat, not a pleasure cruiser.

Most of the time, British warships are kind to things which do business in these waters.

Pilot whales and, to a lesser extent, fin whales, have been sighted fairly regularly. Sailors and aircrew know they're pilot or fin whales courtesy of the Lord Attenborough Marine Life and General Nature Appreciation Cabinet on Ark Royal's bridge which is packed with booklets (and quite a few bars of Galaxy chocolate…) which help the bridge team identify marine life (that's the books, not the chocolate…). All sightings are logged to help the world's conservationists keep tabs.

Not all marine life is benign, of course. Beware killer kelp.

It's done for Ruth and made Fred a widower.

Ruth was the new man, or rather woman, overboard dummy. She was tossed into the Atlantic for an exercise… her orange suit blended with the kelp and she was never seen again. Fred, though in mourning, is still available…

YOU can practise man overboard drills any time you like. Aurigas are few and far between. So has it been worthwhile?

"Oh God, yeah," says Cdr Goldsmith. "We've got just what we needed."

From Cdr Carroll: "The key thing is to get ships and sailors to think as a task group, to think as a team, not just about their own ships, so that we can rock up quickly."

From Lt Cdr Yates: "We've got a lot from Auriga for our buck."

From Cdre Ancona: "As far as I'm concerned, it's been an outstanding success; a very, very substantial stepping stone."

From Capt Clink: "You cannot buy experience. In the months we've been away so far, you can see a fairly rapid improvement in the way we do things."

The last word, rightly, belongs to Britain's ranking sailor, who visited the Auriga force in Halifax.

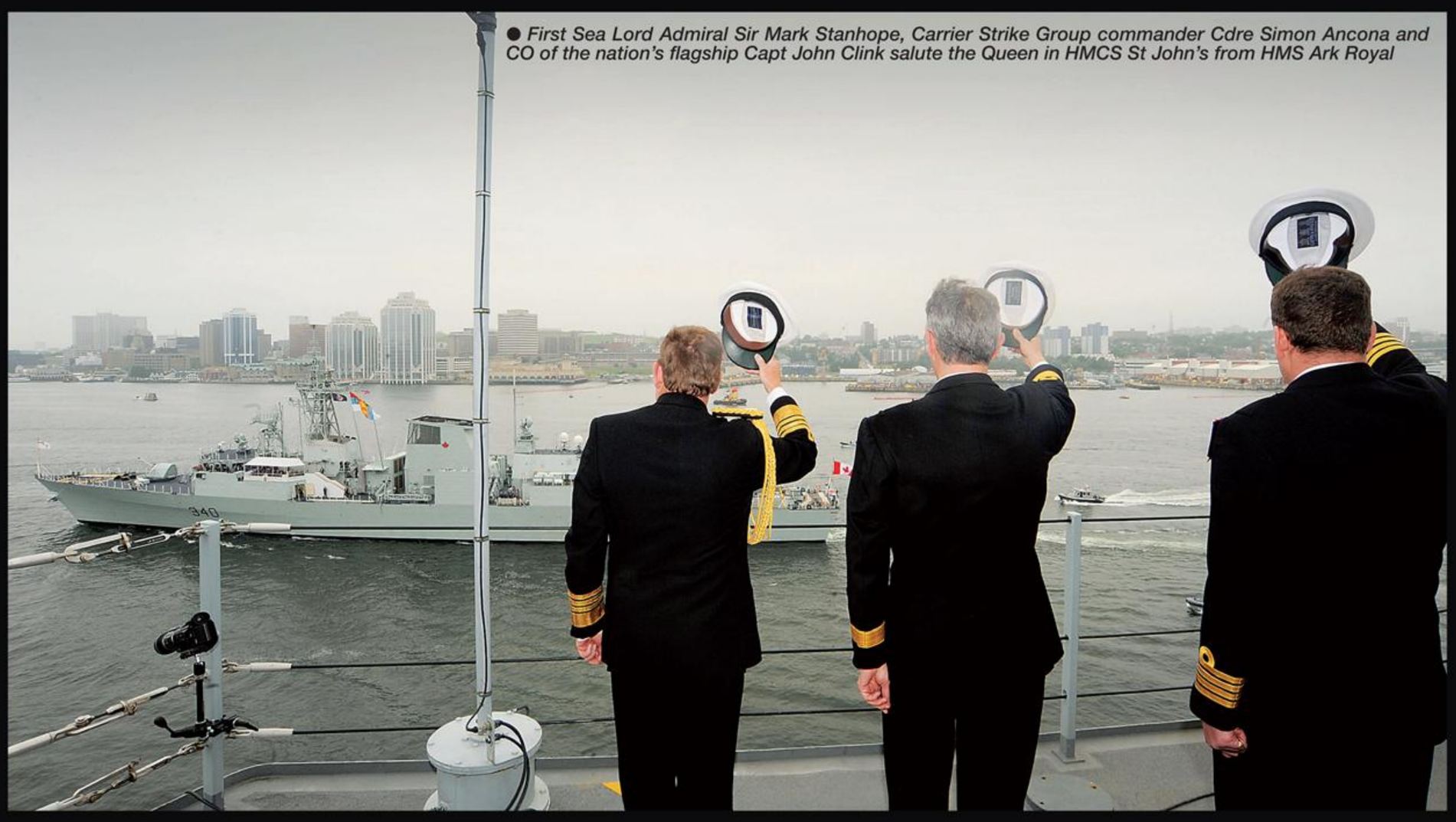
"Unless we practise this, we cannot do it," says First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope.

"The aim is to knock on the prime minister's door and say: if you want a task force, I can deliver it."

Pray that the knock never comes, but if it does, we are ready.

⚓ Canadian Fleet Review, overleaf

pictures: po(phot) jon hamlet and la (phot) gregg macready, hms ark royal



● *First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, Carrier Strike Group commander Cdre Simon Ancona and CO of the nation's flagship Capt John Clink salute the Queen in HMCS St John's from HMS Ark Royal*



● *HMS Sutherland is lit up in Halifax Harbour monarch on her specially-constructed dais*

An occasion

THE Canadian voice on the radio is slightly cautious.

"We're off to the Liverpool next. Do you have any idea where she is?"

It's a good question because (a) there are 30 warships mustered in the waters of Halifax Harbour and (b) there's a swirling mist engulfing Nova Scotia's great port.

It's 8am on Tuesday June 29 2010. In a little over six hours' time Her Majesty the Queen will review Canada's East Coast Fleet and visiting foreign vessels – among them her own Ark Royal, plus her ships Liverpool and Sutherland and RFA Fort George – if she can see them.

And at 8am that's distinctly unlikely.

Ahead of the Ark Royal, tugs help the giant assault ship USS Wasp – twice Ark's size – into place in the review line. The sea fug simply swallows her.

There's no sight of either shore of this great natural harbour – and neither is more than 500 yards distant.

The Union Jack hangs limply on the flagstaff; thanks to the murk you can see the small light in the crown at the top of the staff.

Every minute, a sailor rings Ark Royal's great bell for five seconds. A shipmate bashes a gong on the quarterdeck – warnings that amid the gloom there's a ship at anchor.

Why not sound the horn? I ask. It is, after all, rather louder.

"We'd only use the horn as a last resort because it's so loud," explains navigator Lt Cdr Giles Palin.

So gong and bell it is.

But not for much longer, for the sun burns through the fog gradually to reveal the wooded shores of Dartmouth to port and the skyscrapered waterfront of Halifax to starboard.

The city is Canada's great eastern port, one of the gateways to the continent before the advent of the airliner. A century ago, the Royal Canadian Navy was born here. One hundred years later it remains the home of Canada's Atlantic Fleet.

And it is here that the navies of the western world – British, Dutch, French, Danish, Brazilian, German and American – have gathered for Canada's naval centennial.

VISITING sailors from the UK will find much in Halifax that resonates with back home.

They will find the front pages of the papers dominated by casualties in Afghanistan – and considerable debate about Canada's role in that troubled land.

They will find veterans protesting that today's generation know little of past deeds by the Canadian Navy and less still of the efforts of present-day sailors.

"The Navy is out of sight, out of mind," one vice admiral laments in Halifax's daily paper, *The Chronicle Herald*. "And it's not always appreciated." Sea blindness, it seems, is not just a British disease…

And visiting Jacks and Jennies will find Halifax a mix of Portsmouth and Devonport. You could say they're 'fax similax...

Like Portsmouth the base is slap bang in the middle of the city.

Like Devonport there are numerous grey-stone buildings around the jetties and basins on the waterfront (most serve as restaurants and shops *à la* Barbican).

Like Portsmouth there's a small passenger ferry which crosses the harbour almost constantly (the destination is Dartmouth rather than Gosport).

Like Devonport the weather's invariably capricious, often uncompromising.

Britons have been known to complain about the 'British summer'. Try a Haligonian summer.

One day blistering sunshine and temperatures of 25+°C. The next torrential, horizontal rain whipping into you like hailstones and temperatures a good ten degrees lower.

Liverpool and Sutherland left their berth at Pier 21 – fittingly where Canadians have traditionally welcomed foreigners to their shores – to move to their anchorages the day before the review with a wall of mist and rain moving inexorably up the harbour.

The Liverpudlians sheltered from the torrent under a small awning erected on the flight deck. Not the Sutherlanders, whose ship was outboard. They stood in their foulies and were lashed by the elements. "We're a Guzz ship," one of the sentries says proudly. "Hard as nails."

Still at least the locals are welcoming.

"It's a big ask for a town of this size to take on board something like 30 warships," says Lt Cdr Stu Lear, HMS Liverpool's logistics officer.

Haligonians gave a big response to that big ask. They possess a politeness which puts most Britons to shame. They offer a 'good morning' as you stroll down the street – and offer to give lost British sailors lifts.

The Canadians also erected a 'centennial village', a tented encampment dominated by an enormous beer can (hoorah) – sadly empty (boo) – featuring a funfair (for sailor's families rather than sailors…), live music, food, cash machines, and internet access. All was gratefully appreciated by the visitors.

And as befits any great port, Halifax boasts an eye-watering (or perhaps mouth-watering) number of hostelries: pubs, clubs, nightclubs, restaurants all within a stone's throw of the shore.

The odd one decided the international conglomeration of sailors was not welcome. Most, however, welcomed the influx of cash (one, The Frigate, even flew a gigantic White Ensign to show its appreciation).

Now X number of sailors from Y nations plus beer equals potential problems. Then add an international footballing competition into the mix.

Ah yes, the World Cup. So much anticipation. So much dejection.

Canadian journalists watched the clash with Germany aboard Ark Royal and noted that the crew took the "lopsided England loss" (ie heavy defeat) with a typically British stiff upper lip, a sip on a cup of tea, a few blank expressions. Well, that was in the wardroom. Ratings apparently shouted "Bollocks!" and other choice Anglo-Saxon outbursts at the TV screens within earshot of the reporters…

Just to rub it in, some German guests turned up at a cocktail party aboard Ark Royal the evening of the defeat with badges proclaiming the 4-1 scoreline. *Schadenfreude* from the Germans? Who'd have thought it...

But do not mourn too much, for at least Britain lifted the Mini World Cup trophy – one of numerous sporting events arranged for the visiting sailors, among them the 'mad Olympics' (bull lassoing, cow milking, mad golf – not to be confused with crazy golf – whacking people with huge padded sticks, toilet seat racing – loos fitted with wheels).

Such activities (and runs ashore) meant there was rarely a quiet moment during the British ships' stay in Halifax.

And there was always the review to prepare for.



● *HMS Ark Royal berthed next to the illuminated American assault ship USS Wasp on a typically misty night in Halifax*

during fireworks celebrating Canada Day and (right) one of Ark's sailors salutes the





not to be mist

"WE'VE cleaned and polished our ship, all 28 years old of her, to make her look the best she can," Liverpool's Commanding Officer Cdr Ollie Hutchinson stressed.

"A fleet review's a great event, a great honour."

It is, not least because they don't come around too often.

Just two in the past four decades in British waters. Canada hasn't hosted one for a quarter of a century.

Aside from physical efforts to prepare a ship for a fleet review, there's preparing the ship's company.

Everyone – minus the duty watch – mans the upper decks. They rigidly hold on to the guard rail; there's a right way (palms outstretched, grabbing on to the rail from beneath, interlocking arms with shipmates to your right and left) and a wrong way (everything else).

Then there's circling your cap in the correct direction for the formal act of cheering ship.

Off caps. Raise your right arm to the left side of your cap.

Up caps. Lift the cap off your head, hold it by your outstretched right arm which is rigidly angled at 45°.

Three cheers for Her Majesty the Queen. Circle your cap in a clockwise direction.

Sounds simple?

Well, the crew of HMS Ark Royal spent a good two hours practising in the dispersing mist.

Whipping them into shape, their drill instructor WO Cox – 'Mr C' – a man who's evidently just walked off the set of *Full Metal Jacket*.

"There should be 12 inches between your legs," he imparts to sailors standing at ease.

"It's obvious some of you have never seen 12 inches in your lives. Open your legs. Nothing will drop out."

There's more.

"Some of the RAF are wearing those funny *Thunderbird* caps. You can't salute with *Thunderbird* caps."

"Put some effort into it."

"If you do that again fella, I'll throw you over the side."

After 15 solid minutes of drilling, hooraying, saluting, the only words to come out of his mouth? "Room for improvement."

He barks, snarls and yells because he cares. "We are HMS Ark Royal, the Royal Navy's flagship," he rallies the ship's company. "Her Majesty the Queen needs to have a lasting impression of Ark Royal. She needs to go away thinking that we are smarter, louder and better than anyone else here today."

Louder for sure. As the final practice hoorah drifts across Halifax harbour there's the distinct sound of children's voices coming from the Dartmouth waterfront. *Hooray…*

BY NOW the morning fog has parted to reveal a warm, if rather overcast day. On Ark Royal's flight deck, the Merlins, Sea King and Lynx sit motionless. They will take no part in a flypast, the last act of the review.

But the weather's clearing…

"This is the sucker's gap," explains Cdr Rocky Salmon, Ark's Commander Air, "that clearing in the middle of the day between the mist. It sucks you in."

He, however, is too experienced an aviator to be sucked in.

The staging area for the flypast, south of Halifax, is a mass of grey. The weather is closing in. There's no certainty that the three Merlin and one Lynx due to be launched could be recovered in good time – and Britain's flagship has an exercise programme to stick to.

"We're an all-weather ship," says her captain Capt John Clink succinctly. "We don't have all-weather aircraft."

By now, the Queen – dressed in white (journalists always have to mention the colour of her apparel) – is beginning her review of the mustered warships aboard the Canadian frigate HMCS St John's.

Electronics allow us to track her progress around the anchorages. Although the review is staged within the confines of Halifax Harbour, the bulk of the ships (including Sutherland and Liverpool) anchor in the inner Bedford Basin, larger vessels including Ark Royal in the main harbour; the latter's tall masts do not permit them to pass under the two road bridges spanning the waters.

On the bridge, Ark's electronic chart faithfully records St John's slow progress around the inner basin.

For a good hour the carrier's ship's company, plus personnel from her embarked Fleet Air Arm and RAF squadrons, line the starboard flight deck.

As St John's enters the narrows linking the inner and outer harbour, surrounded by a gaggle of security vessels – a good half dozen. They are joined on the water by yachts, pleasure cruisers, a paddle steamer, speedboats, a bright yellow tug called Theodore with a smile and giant red baseball cap on its funnel, and a boat towing a triangular advertising hoarding.

Ark's 1st Lieutenant Lt Cdr Mick Malone anxiously strides on to the bridge and points at a bit of gaffer tape over a switch.

"That doesn't move," he insists.

Said tape ensures that the words coming out of his mouth in a matter of seconds – "HMS Ark Royal! Ho!" – will be heard by 1,000 men and women over the main broadcast.

He strides out again.

"This is my third fleet review," says LS 'Drabs' Drabble. "I have never seen the Queen. I am not missing her this time holding down a piece of tape." He delegates to an AB.

The tape holds. Several hundred throats cheer. The Queen waves. Drabs is happy.

It is over in less than a minute. St John's has already moved on to the USS Wasp.

A few minutes more and Ark's ship's company fall out. There's a collective groan on the bridge. The Crabs have (again) turned the wrong way when dismissed.

At the head of the review column there are flashes of light followed by thick palls of smoke which blend seamlessly with the descending gloom as destroyer HMCS Athabaskan fires a 21-gun salute.

As Ark's sailors return to their mess decks and cabins, the voice of their captain comes over the main broadcast.

John Clink passes on his gratitude and that of Her Majesty for the efforts of the day.

Much of the signal from the Queen is directed at the Canadians – this is, after all, their review – and, like everything in this land, is also couched in French.

"The last three words have not been translated," says Capt Clink.

"*Splice the mainbrace*."



pictures: po(phot) jon hamlet and la(phot) gregg macready, hms ark royal

COMMENT

Direct your ire

BRIAN PARKINSON should direct his anger (*Letters, July*) about the Russian convoy medals at past and present British governments who have not recognised our service on those convoys during World War 2.

If his father had belonged to either the North Russia Club or the Russian Convoy Club his application would have been dealt with by those clubs' secretaries, who issued the necessary forms and sent them to the Russian Embassy in London.

The Russian government had very little knowledge of who were entitled and who were not, only our own Naval authorities had that information.

It would have been, and still is, an impossible task to contact people who are entitled – many have passed on, or moved.

I can understand Brian's anger at not getting his father's medal – even I have not found it easy to deal with the Russian Embassy to talk to the people who deal with the medal issue.

I put it down to the anti-Russian bias that exists in the media and at top government level.

We would not be enjoying our freedom today if it were not for the Russian people who suffered such hardship in World War 2.

If I can help Brian in anyway he can contact me and I will see what I can do, even if I give him one of my medals.

– F Udell, Stevenage, Herts

...I AM sorry my letter (July) appeared under such an inappropriate heading *Convoy medals came too late*.

This did not apply to my congratulatory comments.

As you will be aware, I have nothing but praise for our ally for sending me, over many years, no fewer than four splendid medals together with supporting certificates.

Their action bears little comparison with our own Government's effort – a small buttonhole Arctic Star received in October 2006, over 60 years after the event, when the vast majority of those involved would have already crossed the bar.

While I was pleased to be a recipient, that's certainly what might be called 'too late'!

– Mike Alston, Secretary, HMS Middleton (L74) Assocation, Maidenhead, Berks

Torch song

EACH year, much press and TV coverage is concerned with remembering the invasion of France in 1944.

Each year, the media totally ignore the earlier invasion of Morocco and Algeria on November 8 1942, which led to the link-up with the 8th Army, the invasions of Sicily, Italy, and in 1944, southern France.

The Royal Navy was very much in evidence in the Mediterranean.

Would *Navy News* consider making the operation and those sailors still alive feel less neglected this year?

– John Physick, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent

Daring's Mk 1 eyeball

PERHAPS you will receive many letters on the officer standing halfway out of a hatch – in the eyes of the ship of HMS Daring featured on your front page in July (*see right*).

Is this the new position of the ship's cable officer who directs operations under instructions from the bridge?

See the bower anchor has been veered and will be held on a brake slip with the cable holder brake released all prior to slipping the anchor.

Note, ships of the modern Navy have their cable deck under cover.

Since the upper deck has an absence of a capstan engine, bollards and fairleads I'm intrigued to know how the ship secures to the dockside?

Perhaps the two apertures in the ship's side have such a purpose?

– Eddie Summerfold, Bury, Lancashire

...I WAS never a small-arms expert, but I am intrigued by the machine-guns mounted on the bridge wing and further aft in your photos of HMS Daring.

I understood the main role of this type was anti-aircraft (assuming they ever get fitted with a working model of Sea Viper system) but surely machine-guns are hardly the short-term answer?

Also, who's the guy up at the sharp end?

I thought sonar and radar had removed the requirement for someone shouting "Left hand down a bit' as in Leslie Phillips and John Pertwee in *The Navy Lark*?

– Barry Prosser, ex FAA, Hants



Lt Cdr Phil Nash, Executive Officer of HMS Daring, told us: "In response to Mr Summerfold's eagle-eyed observations, I thought you might appreciate some background information to explain how the T45 is operated at sea.

"The photo in question was taken during a FOST Thursday War, as Daring transited a simulated mine-swept channel on exit from Plymouth Sound.

"The person in the 'eyes of the ship' is in fact a mine look-out – the ship was at Action Stations in response to a simulated mine threat (if you look closely you should be able to see that the person is wearing anti-flash).

"In addition to employing all of the T45's state of the art sensors to detect mines we still think that the 'Mark 1 eyeball' has an important part to play!

"As for securing the ship alongside, all of the traditional methods are employed (those are fairleads you have spotted).

"The cabledeck, capstans, windlasses and bollards are all hidden away in the enclosed foc'sle and quarterdeck and when the ship is prepared to come alongside Harbour Station hands close up to work ropes in the traditional fashion."

No fond farewell for Inskip Cadets

I AM concerned over the closure of the Sea Cadet Training Centre which was based at the old ratings' accommodation area at HMS Inskip in the Fylde of Lancashire.

When the uniformed naval communications transmitter station became civilian-manned in 1995 the Sea Cadets took over the accommodation block as a training centre for the north-west and seemed to run this successfully for nearly 15 years.

Suddenly in late 2009, in spite of full course bookings for the next year, the staff were told that the place was to close by the end of March 2010.

When staff returned after Christmas leave they were given just 30 days to pack up and leave, which seems to be obscenely quick by any means.

Since that time the place, which had only recently been extensively and expensively refurbished, has remained closed and empty.

I have been waiting for six months to see if any explanation for the closure would appear so that people in the Sea Cadets would know why such a successful enterprise has vanished from their area?

– Lt Cdr P N Furse, (ex CO, HMS Inskip) Elswick, Lancashire

Mike O'Sullivan, Director of Training for the Sea Cadets, explained: "Decisions to close facilities are never taken lightly, but based on detailed research and strong evidence, and we do recognise the human factors involved.

"Please be assured that the decision to move rapidly to closure was made after full consultation with staff and after the appropriate provisions had been made in respect of notice.

"The closure of Inskip was genuinely unavoidable and made in the long-term best interests of the Corps.

"Research undertaken in 2009 showed a significant excess of training capacity, a legacy from the 1970s when the Sea Cadets was a much larger organisation.

"Whilst this excess gave us a good deal of flexibility, it placed pressure on our budget that could not be sustained in these difficult economic times.

"Our decision did not signal a reduction in training as most of Inskip's programmed courses were relocated, and the 2010/11 national training programme is as comprehensive as ever."

Getting to know the Queen

HERE at Culdrose we think your HMS Queen Elizabeth cutaway (July) is an excellent piece of work – your publication is to be commended for publishing it, and artist Ross Watton doubly so for designing it (I've just had a look at his website –I had no idea about him).

A quick look about the RN School of Flight Deck Ops finds several of these pullouts on people's walls about the building.

As we have the responsibility of actually training people to work on the flight deck and the hangar of this ship we have a vested interest in how it builds and develops.

This picture will play an invaluable part in our training, it gives us a sense of scale, and where everything onboard will go – something we haven't seen before.

The new carriers will be with us before long and this picture is already invaluable for memory mapping and briefings – copies of them are all over the walls here in Culdrose.

– CPOA(AH) Paul McKinley, RNAS Culdrose



A £25 Amazon voucher to the letter which amuses, impresses or enlightens us the most.

Carriers 'R' us

I SEE from the June edition that Lester May, with whom I served in Bulwark, has raised the issue of the illogicality of allocation of pennant numbers.

Indeed, since World War 2 both pennant numbers and Naval Party Numbers seem to me to have lost their system.

However, it might help Lester to know that the R Flag Superior for aircraft carriers first appeared in 1944 with the British Pacific Fleet. At that time the RN were issuing R Flag Superior numbers to destroyers.

However, for some reason, the BPF were given numbers under a new system.

In that system, R1 was Formidable, R2 Illustrious, R3 USS Saratoga, R4 USS Ranger, R5 Implacable, R6 USS Enterprise, R7 Indefatigable, R8 Indomitable, R9 USS Essex, R10 USS Yorktown, R11 USS Intrepid, etc.

In the post-war reallocation the RN retained R for carriers (in place of the old system of No Flag Superior or Flag D).

Apart from the lists of BPF pennant numbers which we hold, there also appears to be a separate Flag A superior list, as there are photographs of sloops and escort carriers with A numbers – does anyone hold the key to these?

– Lt Cdr Ben Warlow, Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex

Dunkirk revisited

IT IS a little emotional for me to try to express my thanks to all those Little Ships manned by 'civvy sailors' who gave of their best to bring our defeated army off the beaches of Dunkirk.

I had the honour to return this year, and as we were leaving Ramsgate at about 6.30am, my grandson took some snaps of the little ships leaving and rounding the buoy on their way, a journey of about eight hours.

Once clear of the harbour HMS Monmouth was there to see us safely on our way. The little ships formed up in convoy still – that also brought back memories of my war days.

Can a big **thank you** go out in *Navy News* to say how much we think of their fathers and grandfathers who risked all to save so many? I would be thankful to see that in print.

Most of us who lived through those days are in their nineties, but if all goes well I hope to return in five years' time.

– George Drewett, Shepperton, Middlesex

Fourth Ark had the force

HAVING served six years on the fourth Ark Royal, I must take you to task over your write-up for the cutaway poster for the new carrier.

Firstly, both this drawing and the cutaway drawing some 12 months ago of Ark Royal (1V) show original configurations, and 'dumb down' somewhat the size and shape of the Ark during the latter years of her service.

You also quote that only 20 aircraft were carried. As R09 NATO commitment in those latter years she carried 14 Phantom, 12 Buccaneers, four Gannet AEW, eight Sea King A/S and two Wessex SAR, all housed in two hangar decks when required.

– J A Bray (ex FCEL(A)) Greetham, Leics

Are we the youngest oilies?

I HAVE a question for your readers to ponder.

I am a POWEM(O) serving onboard HMS Liverpool as her Close Range Maintainer, currently deployed off the coast of America.

I was wondering, along with a fellow POWEM(R), also serving onboard HMS Liverpool, are we the two youngest serving members of our dwindling branch with the longest time left to serve (excluding extended career)?

I have currently served just over 18 years, having joined up in March 1992 and my *compadre* in January 1992.

We would be grateful if you could put this to your readers and in the off-chance that Drafty (a very busy man) might see it and give us an answer!

PWOEM(O) Simon Neasham, POWEM(R) Ian Perry, Close Range Maintainers, POs' Mess, HMS Liverpool BFPO 327

opinion

THE Battle of Britain is as symbolic to the RAF as Trafalgar to the Navy and Waterloo to the Army. The courage of the young Spitfire and Hurricane pilots is legendary, as Churchill memorably observed, and has been publicly celebrated over the past few weeks.

In the following 70 years the received wisdom has been that a handful of RAF heroes saved these islands from certain Nazi invasion. It is a brave historian who questions it. But while the heroism of the RAF is undisputed, the Navy's part should not be forgotten.

A year or so ago three senior military historians at the Joint Service Command Staff College went further and disputed the 'glorious myth' that the RAF saved us from invasion. They contended that the Germans stayed away because there was never a hope of capturing the British Isles so long as the Navy held sway. German generals agreed, with one General Halder memorably saying any invasion 'would send my troops into a mincing machine.'

It is a fascinating argument and one that could rage long and hard, with opposing views on the vulnerability of our ships to German air attack, the numbers of destroyers available on the South Coast, the danger of German mines – and so the debate goes on in its captivating and unprovable course.

Without wishing to detract in any way from the RAF, *Navy News* of all papers should not forget the Navy's part.

The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD

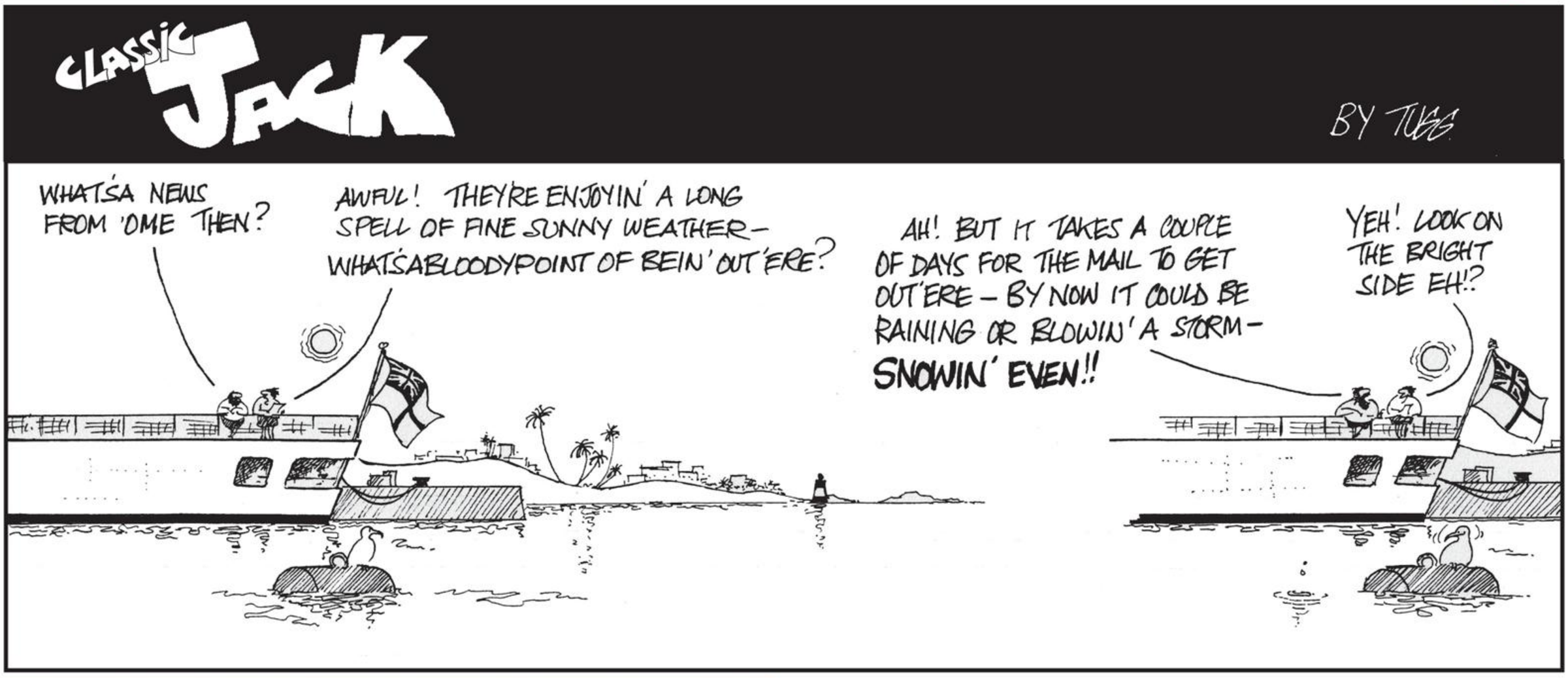
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Otway's Scottish birth

I WAS delighted to read the article *Hero Township* (June) about the preserved submarine HMAS Otway in Holbrook, Australia (*pictured above*).

I had read about this great feat of moving an Oberon submarine 460k inland, but I have never had the privilege of being in Australia and therefore have never seen this preserved submarine.

I have been interested in all six Australian Oberon-class submarines from their build.

The six: Oxley, Otway, Ovens, Onslow, Orion and Otama, were built at the Cartsburn Shipyard of Scotts' Shipbuilding and Engineering Company in Greenock between 1966 and 1974.

At the time I was Assistant Naval Architect and was instrumental in their build, launches, dockings, and all the trim and stability dives.

The one disappointing feature of the article was that no mention was made of the builders. Neither does any of the exhibition or museum material mention them.

The founding of Scotts of Greenock was in 1711 – 300 years next year. We would like your readers to know that we have formed a *Friends of Scotts* committee and are planning events.

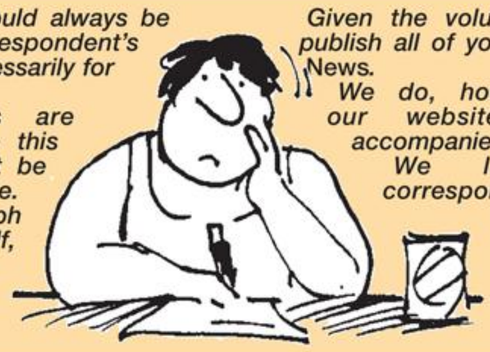
Scotts, in days gone by, built many ships for the Royal Navy and therefore we would be delighted if you would consider doing an article or making a mention in *Navy News*.

– **Tom Dunn**, executive Committee, *Friends of Scotts*, Greenock,

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it.



Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in Navy News.

We do, however, publish many on our website, www.navynews.co.uk, accompanied by images.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.

Vivid memories of Bari bombing

I HAVE before me a picture of HMS Quail, G45, and having read the account on *Wikipedia* I'd like to put the record straight.

I joined her at Hebburn while still in dockyard hands.

What I'd like to point out is contrary to the free encyclopaedia *Wikipedia* she was mined as she was just outside Bari Harbour in Eastern Italy after night-time operations in the Adriatic.

She was never beached, as someone claims, but was immediately towed into harbour.

Her quarterdeck men were in the rig of the day and were all killed as they had fallen in for entering harbour.

I was gear-room watchkeeper and just before the mine struck I had visited the tiller flat to take the last steering engine readings, just missing it.

It was forenoon and some men were killed as they had gone back aft to draw the pre-lunch grog ration.

I dashed the short distance to the quarterdeck and I'll never forget the sight that met my eyes, the stern was like a metal hillside with the bodies of the quarterdeck men lying around, apparently killed by blast, the after-gun had been blown over the side.

The fleet-sweeper Hebe was mined in similar circumstances a few days later, suffering many casualties.

I was aboard Quail as skeleton crew during the horrific bombing of Bari Harbour in early December 1943 and remember the mud thrown over the ship by near-misses from the harbour bed.

A ship containing mustard-gas bombs blew up – the USS John Harvey.

I'm in my 90th year but I remember things so vividly.

Seventeen ships were hit that night of December 2 and well over 1,000 men killed, the harbour full of oil and floating bodies, quite a rough time.

– **Thomas Russell,**
High Green, Sheffield

This just won't suit

WHILST serving many tours in Whale Island in Portsmouth and being very busy, I find it so helpful when the pipe is made twice a week notifying us that the Mobile Clothing Wagon is now in attendance.

I can pop out and get my shirts, etc, and be back at my desk before my coffee goes cold, but now we hear that as of August this service is being withdrawn.

Why can't we just come to our senses and keep this essential bit of kit?

Not only does it save us hours and hours of travelling to and from Nelson, but we must now in this environmentally-friendly state look at our carbon footprint, eg, one wagon or hundreds of cars on the road.

– **'Concerned Commander,'**
Portsmouth

We checked with staff from the Naval Base Commander's office in Portsmouth who confirmed that the van will probably go as a cost-savings measure.

The final decision will be taken later this summer – Ed



'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'



Medical Squadron gathers at Chivenor

THE unit may have been around for 38 years, but 2010 saw the very first Medical Squadron reunion dinner.

Commando Logistic Regiment (CLR) was formed in January 1972, with one of the five constituent squadrons providing first and second-line medical support for deployed formations, based in the Longroom at Stonehouse Barracks.

This meant support at every level, from medics embedded with forward patrol units through to the manning and infrastructure of small field hospitals, surgical facilities or dressing stations throughout the medical evacuation chain.

The dinner was held at Chivenor, home of the squadron since 1995.

In almost four decades the role of the squadron has not changed a great deal.

A total of 103 personnel staff two medical troops, a support troop and a squadron HQ.

Amongst the guest speakers at the dinner was Surg Capt Rick Jolly (Ret'd), a former Officer Commanding Medical Squadron.

Surg Capt Jolly established and ran the British field hospital in the Falklands at Ajax Bay, housed in a disused abattoir.

Hospital staff dealt with casualties of the attack on RFA Sir Galahad at Fitzroy, as well as wounded from the battles of Goose Green, Mount Harriet and Mount Longdon, also treating wounded Argentinean soldiers.

Medical Squadron have deployed on operations throughout the world since their implementation, including the Falklands, Iraq and Kuwait, humanitarian work after a hurricane in Montserrat and Antigua, Sierra Leone and Kosovo.

Surg Cdre Noel Bevan, the Director of Royal Naval Medical Services, and Col Peter Taylor RM, the CO of CLR, both addressed guests.

Cdre Bevan said the excellent work of squadron medics mean that numerous lives have been saved, while Col Taylor said he was truly humbled by the hard work and compassion of the men and women of the squadron.

The medics, along with other elements of CLR, will deploy to Afghanistan on Operation Herrick 14 next March – the squadron's third stint after Operations Herrick 5 and 9.

Dauntless maintains Wrens connection

HMS DAUNTLESS may be less than five years old but she has picked up a baton which was first carried almost 60 years ago.

The Type 45 destroyer has a special affiliation with the **Association of Wrens** (AOW) through a land-locked post-war training establishment.

In 1953 the existing WRNS training establishment at Burghfield, near Reading, was commissioned under the White Ensign as HMS Dauntless.

It continued to train Wrens until closure in 1981, when females undertook their basic training alongside male naval ratings at HMS Raleigh.

Groups from the AOW have been taking every opportunity to visit 'their' ship as her commissioning date loomed.

In April six ex-Wrens from the association's Tyne branch who had trained at Burghfield, together with two wartime ex-Wrens, were given an extensive tour of the new destroyer alongside in Portsmouth.

The group was escorted by CPO MEA Wendy Frame – also an AOW member.

They were welcomed into the Warrant Officers' and Senior Rates' Mess for refreshments, watched uckers being played in the Junior Rates' Mess, visited the bridge, the Ops Room and generally explored the ship from stem to stern, taking numerous ladders in their stride.

The only thing they didn't manage to do was get piped ashore, having to settle instead for a photo on the brow.

The association was also represented at the launch of the ship in Glasgow in 2007, when Cdr Giulian Hill, the Senior Naval Officer of the ship, presented the ship's crest to AOW president Anthea Larken.

And representatives of the AOW were again on the invitation list when the destroyer was commissioned in Portsmouth earlier in the summer.

The AOW first appeared at the end of 1920 under the leadership of Dame Katharine Furse.

Katharine Furse had led the first Voluntary Aid Detachments sent to France, groups of civilians – the majority female – who served in roles such as cooks and later as nursing support.

Upon her return to London in 1917, she was offered the post of Director WRNS.

At the end of World War 1 there was a need to administer a large grant of money to ex-Service women by the Navy and Army Canteen Board, which led to the foundation of the Service Women's Fund Committee in 1920.

Thus the WRNS Friendly Association, first renamed the Society of Wrens, then, by the end of the year, the Association of Wrens, was formally set up in November 1920 with Dame Katharine Furse as president.

The organisation now has more than 7,000 members, and membership is drawn from ex-WRNS/QARNNS personnel, together with those women currently serving in, or retired from the Royal Navy.

Members also contribute to *The Wren* magazine and the website www.wrens.org.uk

See next month for more on the Association of Wrens







● *(Top) Association of Wrens president Anthea Larken receives the HMS Dauntless crest from Cdr Giulian Hill; (above) members of the Tyne branch of the AOW visit Dauntless in the spring, escorted by CPO Wendy Frame (kneeling); (left) HMS Dauntless at her commissioning in Portsmouth Naval Base in June*

Picture: LA(Phot) Arron Hoare

Concord ensign is lowered

THE **HMS Concord Association** held its decommissioning reunion in Portsmouth, the home port of the post-war destroyer.

Friday evening saw members celebrate the launch of the ship on May 14 1945, and the following evening former sailors from as far afield as Spain, Gibraltar, Canada and Australia joined shipmates for a decommissioning banquet in Portsmouth Guildhall, presided over by association chairman S/M Peter Lee-Hale.

Also there was Capt Tony McCrum, the sole surviving captain of the seven who commanded the destroyer.

A memorial service the following day was held in St Ann's Church in Portsmouth Naval Base – the same venue as the inaugural service in 1995.

During proceedings the roll was called of all those members of the association who had crossed the bar by a representative of each of the six commissions, each assisted by a cadet from TS Hornet, the association's adopted Sea Cadet unit.

The *Last Post* and *Reveille* were sounded by POC Harry Penton of TS Tiger, the Chippenham unit.

After the service all moved to TS Hornet in Gosport for a buffet lunch, followed by a march-past of the association and cadets, the salute being taken by Admiral Sir Jeremy Black, former CINC Portsmouth and a member of the association, having served as a midshipman in Concord.

Ceremonial sunset was performed by the TS Tiger band, during which the Concord ensign was lowered for the last time; it was later handed to the Gosport cadets to be laid up at their HQ, joining the ship's bell, which was handed over some years ago and is used at all unit parades.

Later that evening members gathered in the Nelson lounge at the Maritime Club for a farewell 'Noggin and a Natter'.

After commissioning, Concord sailed to the Far East to become part of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla, serving in the Korean War (where two sailors were killed by enemy fire) and the Malayan Emergency.

The destroyer was also present when HMS Amethyst made her dash to freedom during the 'Yangtse Incident', though her precise actions are a matter of heated debate, with supporters claiming the ship sailed upriver to shield Amethyst from the guns of the powerful Woosan Forts, and that official reports of the day deliberately wrote Concord out of the picture by simply stating that the two ships met at the mouth of the Yangtse.

Fair day for fundraising at Ely

A BUSY day and good weather helped **City of Ely** branch raise more than £600 for Help for Heroes with a stall outside the city's cathedral.

Shipmates were out in force on St Etheldreda Fair day, and as it coincided with an Open University graduation ceremony there were plenty of people milling around happy to support the cause.

Members were back out on the streets to welcome home the 1st Bn the Royal Anglian Regiment – the Vikings – after a six-month tour of duty in Afghanistan.

Ely members and their standard were joined by shipmates from **March** branch in showing their appreciation as the troops paraded through the city and attended a service at the cathedral.

Palace party

S/M Tom Robson, of the **HMS Bruce Association**, and his wife Rita have attended Royal garden party at Buckingham Palace in recognition of his unswerving dedication to the Royal Navy and particularly to ex-Boy Seamen.

Tom, from Darlington, was born into a mining family and spent a short period down the mines before joining the Navy as a Boy Seaman in his mid-teens in 1947 at HMS Bruce in Fife – despite the loss of his brother, who died when HMS Unbeaten was sunk during the war.

Tom served 15 years, leaving the Navy as a petty officer qualified in torpedo and anti-submarine warfare.

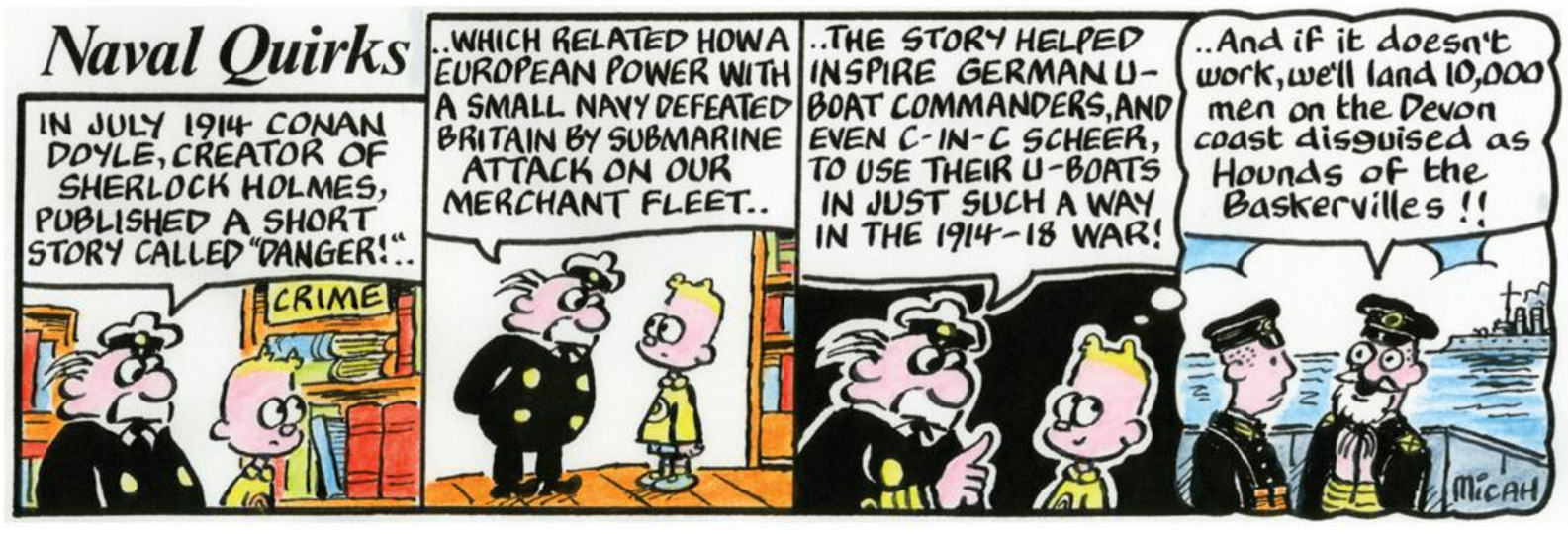
Part of that service was in the Far East during the Malayan Emergency.

One of his main aims now is to ensure that the history of Boy Seamen is recorded for posterity.

He has also written a book entitled Boy Seamen RN – the True Story, and he lectures on various Naval themes including Boy Cornwell VC, Capt James Cook, Mutiny on the Bounty, Jutland and the Yangtse Incident.

Tom said: "Our day at Buckingham Palace was brilliant and we were so proud to enjoy such a nostalgic occasion.

"Temperatures were in the 80s. Several people were affected by the heat but we stuck to naval tradition and remained in the Dress of the Day."



Leamington chairman is mourned

THE chairman of **Royal Leamington Spa**, S/M Tony Dixon, has died.

Ex-Ganges boy Tony served in a number of ships, including HMS Illustrious, Unicorn, Cockade, Bressingham and Comet.

Tony undertook several roles, including vice chairman, standard bearer and latterly chairman.

He was made a vice president when ill health forced him to resign as chairman.

He was also proud of his membership of the **8th Destroyer Group Association**, for whom he was standard bearer and rum bosun at their annual reunions in Scarborough.

One reunion missing from the branch's calendar this year is that of the **Korean Veterans Association**, who decided last year that age was becoming too much of a hindrance.

Shipmates said they would miss the visit to their club, so have offered an alternative proposal – association members wishing to make their own trip can use the club's facilities for the weekend.

Contact S/M Brian Badsey at the RNA Club, Riverside, Adelaide Road, Royal Leamington Spa CV32 5AH, tel 01926 770421, if you are interested in taking up the offer.

Middleton veterans gather once more

ONE of the last World War 2 destroyer associations held a reunion at the RNA Club in Leamington Spa.

The **HMS Middleton (L74) Association** welcomed 12 of the surviving 33 members of the ship's company who were on board between 1941 and 1946.

The most senior member was Admiral of the Fleet Sir Edward Ashmore, the association's patron, and Middleton's first First Lieutenant at the age of 21.

Also there were president Capt Reginald Hann and Lt Arthur Berryman, who lives in Australia.

The present HMS Middleton is currently in the Gulf – a far cry from the Arctic waters in which L74 spent much of her life.

Yotties deliver Queen's old racing yacht



● *Bloodhound arrives at Leith, crewed by former Yotties*

A CREW of former Royal Yachtsmen delivered a classic ocean racing yacht once owned by the Queen to Leith so that it can go on display alongside their old ship.

The Yotties berthed Bloodhound next to Britannia in Edinburgh, a berth she will occupy for ten months of the year.

For the other two – July and August, starting in 2011 – the 63ft yacht will be available for private charter, either sailing familiar waters on the west coast of Scotland or in the Solent.

The yacht has a long racing pedigree.

She was built in 1936 by Camper and Nicholson for American huntsman Isaac Bell, and after being sold on she almost sank after being holed in a race in the Channel in 1956.

The Queen and Prince Philip bought her in 1962, and as well as accompanying Britannia on Royal Family holidays in Scotland, Bloodhound and her permanent crew were made available to yacht clubs across the country to teach young people the art of sailing.

Her most recent owners were yacht restorers Tony and Cindy McGrail, who sold her to the Royal Yacht Britannia Trust this year.

Two of the Yotties who delivered Bloodhound to Leith were part of her original Royal crew.

Bloodhound will form part of a new exhibition focussing on the Royal Family's passion for sailing, and visitors will be able to view her from a specially-built pontoon.

Memories of old Ark on busy deployment

WITH HMS Ark Royal again playing a prominent role in Navy matters *(see Auriga coverage, pages 21-25)*, a timely reminder of past glories comes from S/M John Clements.

John was a leading hand on Ark Royal IV in 1959-61, most of it as one of the quartermasters, and has memorabilia from the carrier's activities around Europe from the spring of 1960 onwards – exactly 50 years ago.

Ark's commission had begun in earnest in March, with the Scimitar jets of 807 NAS starting intensive flying serials as soon as the ship was in range of Gibraltar.

After extensive work-up exercises throughout the summer in the Med the Ark headed back to Scotland and Norway for a further work-out, culminating in Exercise Swordthrust in late September.

As the carrier headed back to the Med, via some maintenance in Devonport, 807 went ashore then returned to join the Gannets of 849 A Flight, the Sea Vixens of 893 NAS (which had succeeded the aircraft of 892 NAS), Whirlwind helicopters of 824 NAS and various other temporary FAA lodgers on board the Ark.

Back in Malta the carrier achieved a little piece of history – two Scimitars and five Gannets successfully launched from her deck while she lay at anchor in Grand Harbour *(pictured below)*.

Further large-scale exercises involving the US Sixth Fleet, the RAF, Army and, at various times, HM ships Hermes, Victorious and Albion, reached their climax during a violent storm off Gibraltar.

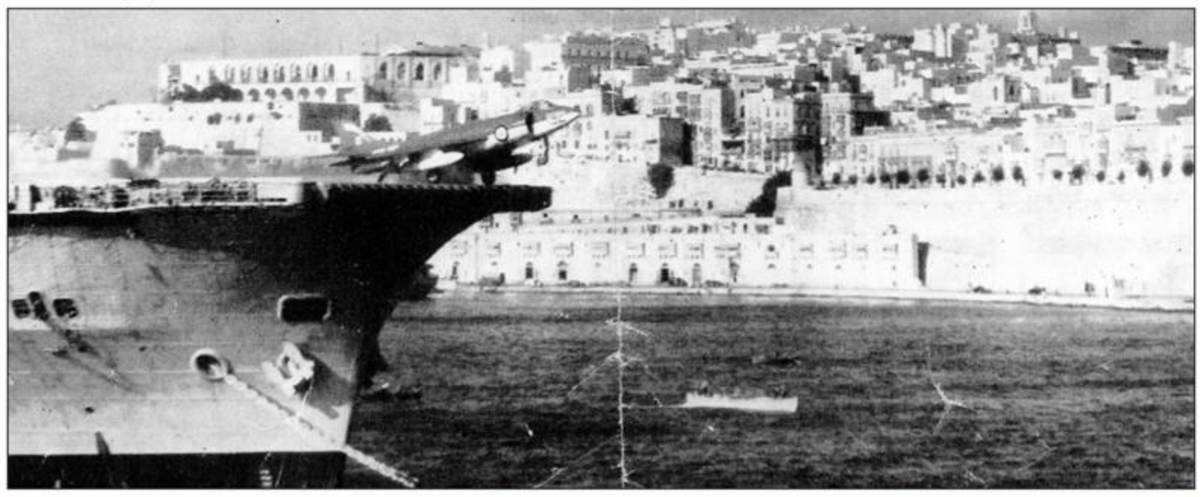
The warship spent Christmas in Malta, and John Clements' pictures *(right)* show some of the efforts made by the ship's company to spread the festive spirit – apart from a carol service in the hangar and ship's concert party gigs, the Ark welcomed more than 2,000 "poor children" on board for a party, with some getting the chance to take off and land on the flight deck (with judicious use of wires and a miniature aircraft – *see above right*) as well as greeting various Santa Clauses and pirates.

The ship sailed in the New Year for more exercises off Malta before sailing via Lisbon for cold-weather exercises in the North Atlantic and a visit to snowy New York.

During 12 years in the RN John also served in Loch Veyatie, Loch Insh, Alcaston, Diana and Urchin and, although he enjoyed his time on larger vessels, "I did prefer the smaller ships," he declared.







£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery submarine in our June edition *(right)* was HMS Astute, and the class was named after HMS Amphion.

Mr C Cooke of Bristol wins our £50 prize.

This month's ship *(above)*, was originally designed for an African navy, but went on to serve under the White Ensign before being sold to a Far Eastern navy.

What was her RN name, which country ordered her and what was her original name?

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, *Navy News*, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH.



Coupons giving the correct answer will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Closing date for entries is September 15. More than one entry can be submitted, but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our October edition. The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 186

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....

My answers .....

.....

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Weymouth plans jubilee day

WEYMOUTH branch is to mark its golden jubilee with a drumhead service of dedication of a new branch standard next month.

At the same event **Portland** branch will lay up their old standard in conjunction with **Weymouth**.

The event will take place at Nothe Fort in Weymouth on Sunday September 19.

A parade will form up at 1330 by the Nothe Inn car park in order to march into the fort for the ceremony, which begins at 1400.

There will be a buffet reception on completion at the Sea Cadet Training Centre Duke of York.

This will include a tot for standard bearers, together with commemorative enamel standard bearers' bar.

Organisers need to know the number of standard bearers and guests who wish to attend; contact S/Ms Ron and Jean Pattison on 01305 782413 as a matter of urgency; you can also email on ronjpa@tiscali.co.uk

There will be free parking available on the day, and the RNAS Yeovilton bluejacket band will provide musical accompaniment.

Bude team takes to the water

MEMBERS of **Bude** branch were out on the water for a recent exped, travelling via Holsworthy to sample the delights of the Exeter Canal.

There is something of a trend developing here – the previous trip was to the Tiverton branch of the Grand Western Canal.

Bude secretary S/M Bob Gelder reports that the group experienced "a very enjoyable short voyage – NAAFI services on board and no cases of canal-sickness to report."

S/M Bob also noted that sadly the visitors "missed two RAS (Liquids) positions en route – but managed to make up for it by being welcomed warmly to the confines of the **White Ensign Club**, Exeter, who provided the daily tot and an excellent buffet."

Bude shipmates look forward to welcoming White Ensign members back at Bude RFC for their meeting this month.

Fans thrilled by Ambush

MEMBERS of the **Submariners Association (Derbyshire branch)** have congratulated the HMS Ambush field gun team on their performance in the Brickwoods contest at HMS Collingwood.

The men of the association's affiliated boat took the Plate 2 prize, the Fleet and Endeavour trophies, exploits which caused Derbyshire shipmates to shout themselves hoarse.

"All the Ambush results were good against teams such as Portsmouth and Plymouth naval bases, but to see the team romp in first on the Plate 2 run was brilliant and the team were justifiably chuffed," said S/M Terry Hall, secretary of the association.

Algerines break

THE **Algerines Association** are to hold their autumn break at Mill Rythe Holiday Park on Hayling Island, near Portsmouth, from Monday September 20 to Monday September 27. Full board will be £197 per person, plus entertainment.

For details contact organiser George Patience on 01456 450659 or M Hutchins on 01903 766895.

Hull and hearty

RNA HQ have passed on a message of Bravo Zulu to **Hull** branch, which has topped the 100-member mark for the first time in many years.

The ratio of full members to associate members is around 2:1, and HQ said the achievement is due to the "hard work of the committee and members who have worked tirelessly to bring awareness of the branch to the good people of Hull through fundraising events, veterans' events, social activities and radio and press announcements."

Money for nothing

FREE money for the Association – and all through very little effort on the part of members.

HQ has again reminded taxpaying members that by completing a Gift Aid form they will increase the value of their subscription without penalty.

It will also help to maintain the annual subscription at £10, as the tax paid can be recovered by the Association, and a Gift Aid declaration lasts until rescinded.

Walk for SSAFA

A **LINCOLN** branch member undertook a 60-mile walk around the city to raise money for SSAFA Forces Help.

S/M Ian O'Connor, a former Royal Green Jacket who has been an associate member for four years, chose Armed Forces Day to don an 80lb backpack and tour the villages around Lincoln.

Ian, a prison officer, left at 0800 and arrived back at the Lincoln RNA Club 14 hours later.

First contact, last resort

IT'S NOT Thunderbirds. For a start, there are no palm trees round a swimming pool, and no blue/grey rockets or large green pod-carrying flying machines have been seen in the skies of Middlesex.

But when you can call on state-of-the-art ships and aircraft, highly-trained troops and a wealth of experience, who needs International Rescue?

Last month we saw how Fleet Operations oversees the activities of RN units across the world, ensuring deployment targets are met and obstacles are removed wherever possible.

But there is another side to the organisation, based in Oswald Building at Northwood – reacting rapidly to a potential crisis in a way few other organisations are able to emulate.

At the sharp end, Fleet Ops' own Commander Task Force (CTF) 320 acts as the Navy's emergency-response unit, ready to tackle short-notice counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics and anti-submarine operations.

CTF 320 Operations Officer Lt Cdr Tim Hounsom said that the organisation is responsible for three main military tasks – the provision and protection of the nuclear deterrent, providing aid to the civil authorities and maintaining the integrity of UK waters.

Non-military organisations, such as the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) or the police's SO15 counter-terrorism organisation, can look to Fleet Ops for advice on maritime matters.

"On a daily or weekly basis it is difficult to say what is going to happen – we have so many fingers in so many pies, the job is constantly changing," said Lt Cdr Hounsom.

"But, by way of example, when the volcanic ash cloud from Iceland came into our air space, it was CTF 320 which was tasked to run the operation to repatriate military personnel and civilians back to the UK."

Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ), also based at Northwood, were in on the venture, as was the Ministry of Defence operations directorate in London, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the British ambassadors to France and Spain, various ferry companies, the French Navy command centre at Brest and their RN counterparts at Portsmouth.



● *Impromptu gatherings help the flow of information in Fleet Ops*

With HM Ships Ark Royal, Albion and Ocean on stand-by to help out as troops returning from the Middle East kicked their heels alongside holidaymakers in northern Spain, staff at Fleet Ops were at the forefront of planning and co-ordination efforts.

"No one was expecting an ash cloud to descend on the UK," said Lt Cdr Hounsom.

"But whilst dealing with all that, at the same time we were still looking at contingent operations and counter-terrorism, and still liaising with the Serious Organised Crime Agency to stem the flow of drugs from abroad.

"So really we cannot say what we are going to expect when we walk into work of a morning. No two days are the same.

"It's exceedingly rewarding – there can be periods of quiet where you consider regrouping and trying to plan for future operations, interspersed with periods of intense activity."

As far as Fleet Ops is concerned, early intelligence is the best option, allowing suspect vessels to be tracked and monitored and – if necessary – boarded by specialist teams, handing maverick mariners and contraband cargo over to the relevant UK bodies, such as the UK Borders Agency or the police.

And the guardians of UK waters are not just concerned with drugs and smuggling – there is always the remote possibility of a renegade ship being used to attempt to blow up a UK port, or a ferry being hijacked and passengers taken hostage.

'Military aid to civilian authorities' is a wide category, and puts Fleet Ops firmly in the front line, if not on the front page.

Take the Olympics in two years – it is not just the athletes who are planning meticulously for the event.

"We are responsible for drawing up a workable plan to provide protection for London and Weymouth and Portland for the 2012 Olympics, a robust plan to stop any armed or terrorist action threatening UK interests or athletes and other personnel," said Lt Cdr Hounsom.

There is also a smattering of light blue uniforms in the Maritime Operations Centre, responsible for maritime patrol aircraft; during operations they become the air staff of CTF 320, but their proximity to the Duty Controllers means they are also a useful conduit between the RN and RAF on broader issues.

Most problems that flow into Fleet Ops are manageable, and a workable solution is usually found.

But for those problems which become full-blown crises, Fleet Ops has a more radical approach – the Fleet Incident Response Cell or FIRC.

This group acts as the single point of contact for the senior officer at the centre of the crisis, allowing him or her to concentrate on the job in hand while the rest of the FIRC manages whatever support is needed.

And as the FIRC swings into action, Navy Command Headquarters in Portsmouth will also be standing up a team to take the pressure off the FIRC, allowing them to devote all their attention to finding the answers.

The cell is an ad-hoc team, calling in whatever expertise is needed to tackle a predicament which could mean the fate of a ship or the lives of her sailors are in the balance.

The first call would be to the Duty Fleet Controller (DFC), situated on the floor above the main Fleet Ops office.

One of the current DFCs is Lt Cdr Bill Powell, who said: "I am one of five controllers, on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

"It is the same for the Duty Submarine Controller, and the ops room assistants – we all work one in five, and the place never closes."

Again, access to the right information and people is crucial to the Fleet Ops response, whether they manage the situation 'in-house' or bring in back-up from experts.

"We are the waist of the hour glass – there is a mass of information coming in, and we tell all the right people," said Lt Cdr Powell.

"It's not quite a one-stop shop, but as long as someone in dark blue or lovat green needs assistance, they can come to us and we can put them on to people who can help."

Naval Intelligence desks sit close by the DFC area, feeding relevant information into the process as needed, while maps on screen and copies of sailing schedules tell Fleet Ops where RN ships should be at any given time.

The Northwood unit has fast-dial lines to the Falklands, the UK Maritime Component Command (UKMCC) in Bahrain and the EU Maritime Force almost next-door at Northwood.

And if push comes to shove they have the numbers, work and out-of-hours, of key players in any emergency.

"If we filter information properly we can usually avoid getting people out of bed by giving a holding answer or saying we will deal with it later, in the morning," said Lt Cdr Powell.

In an out-of-hours doomsday scenario, the DFC will take a quick sitrep from the unit involved and set the wheels in motion.

After a brief exchange with Fleet (FOO) or Submarine Operations Officer (SOO) – whoever got into the office quickest – the decision is made to stand up the FIRC.

A pre-arranged group of individuals with a wide range of expertise – including the Chief Salvage and Mooring Officer – can then be assembled.

One such example saw the engine room of ice patrol ship HMS Endurance flooded in the Beagle Channel off Tierra del Fuego in South America in 2008.

The patrol ship's Executive Officer, in command of Endurance, used a satellite phone to call the DFC every 20 minutes while the Fleet Ops team sought a solution and the sailors of Endurance battled to keep her afloat.

During any emergency, of course, Fleet Ops still has to ensure that the standard tasks and other deployments are still running smoothly.

Among the experts who might be called into the FIRC is Lt Cdr Andy Ward, who handles minewarfare and diving issues.

"I schedule the mine countermeasures vessels, eight Hunts and eight Sandowns," said Lt Cdr Ward.

"I do day-to-day management of the long-term plot, and if there is a breakdown or bad weather we take the plan back and look at tasks and priorities – what is operationally essential?"

One area which can cause the odd headache is the four-ship force operating in the Gulf as part of PJHQ's Operation Telic group – "the tip of the spear", in the words of Deputy Commander-in-Chief Fleet Rear Admiral Richard Ibbotson.

Lt Cdr Ward continued: "If there is a problem during day-to-day business, I come up with different courses of action.

"That could have a long-term impact on crews and generating them right down the line – six, 12 and 18 months.

"And they are at the end of a 4,000-mile airbridge.

"It might be that a ship will say 'we would like to go in here,' so we could end up talking to an embassy to get the ship in for a visit, for example.

"We can get right down amongst the weeds there, or be working right up to a high level."

Fleet Ops also has command of the EOD (explosive ordnance disposal) groups, though the scope of the task here goes well beyond the common perception of mines caught in fishing nets or flares washed ashore.



● *HMS Chatham's Lynx helicopter during a rescue mission in a cyclone – one of Fleet Ops' enduring headaches is matching up the needs of both aircraft and ships* Picture: PO(Phot) Owen King

"We could end up dealing with a misfired missile, for example," said Lt Cdr Ward.

"If it hadn't been fired it would be a stores matter, but otherwise it is an EOD issue, so we may have to get a team out to take it off the ship and get rid of it.

"A lot of what we do is liaison with other people – for standard EOD work, tactical command is given to the Army at Didcot, and they alert the nearest team."

Probably four-fifths of Lt Cdr Ward's job is routine, day-to-day stuff – but when it gets lively it's as lively as it gets.

He recalls the FIRC being stood up when HMS Nottingham grounded on Wolf Rock off Australia eight years ago, with his particular area of concern being the state of the stricken destroyer's Sea Dart missiles.

One of the trickier Fleet Ops tasks on a day-to-day basis is running the aviation desk, currently the fiefdom of Lt Cdr Jonathan Bird.

"Most of my time is trying to match up ships' requirements for aircraft for training and deployment, and for squadrons' requirements for deck training," said Lt Cdr Bird.

"That takes up about 70 per cent of my time – there are either too many ships and not enough aircraft or too many aircraft for the few decks available.

"So there is a lot of trading and prioritising – there's always something that pops up and throws a spanner in the works. It can be frustrating.

"The rest of my time is keeping a weather eye on ships deployed and their flights.

"We look at defects and issues, including training, and ship issues which could impact on the overall task.

"We often react to short-notice issues and provide general aviation advice whenever something comes up.

"It's not that I know everything – I have a broad range of knowledge, though I know who to go to for the detail."

Fleet Ops looks out for everyone, right down to the smallest vessels – the fishery protection ships and P2000 patrol boats, as well as the survey squadron.

In fact, HM/FPS desk man Lt Cdr Simon Weaver has more of a role in scheduling his flotilla than his colleagues – he has five-year plans for survey ships, though only the next 30 months are in detail.

Fishery protection is slightly different, looking a year ahead as the task of policing the English, Welsh and Northern Irish fisheries is subject to an annual contract with the Marine Management Organisation.

With ships operating far and wide, and the UK welcoming allied warships to our waters, there is one more Fleet Ops responsibility to consider: diplomatic clearance.

WO Arty Shaw has now moved on from Fleet Ops – he is currently River Officer at Dartmouth – but much of his time at Northwood was spent clearing the way for visits.

"In simple terms it is really a question of good manners," said WO Shaw.

"If we send a ship somewhere that is not ours, it is only good manners that we should ask first."

Jacking up such a visit to a foreign port usually starts around three months in advance, involving the defence attaché in the relevant country.

"Every country is different – some are very efficient, some not so," said the senior rate.

He also generates diplomatic clearance for NATO warships visiting UK ports and shores and overseas territories, making sure that the procedures are spot on.

"If they send a letter we reply by letter; if they apply by signal we reply by signal," he said.

"I reckon I spent most of my time dealing with foreign ships and embassies – I dealt with perhaps 350-400 visits a year."

Time and again the importance of communication is underlined – keeping people in the loop.

And neatly enough, the Fleet Ops process is itself a loop, whichever one of its roles it fulfils.

The performance of units on deployment or in a crisis, the actions taken at Northwood and the outcomes are fed back down the line to the Maritime Warfare Centre and other interested parties.

The results of such analysis are in turn passed back to the 'customers' – the MOD, or perhaps other Government departments – which means future deployments can be tailored even more closely to requirements.

It also means that the next command team to visit Fleet Ops will be just that little bit better prepared than their predecessors, locking Fleet Ops and the RN into a cycle of continuous improvement.



● *Soldiers of 1 Rifles on board HMS Albion in Santander on the last leg of their journey home to the UK from Afghanistan during the ash cloud crisis – Fleet Ops were instrumental in contingency plans* Picture: LA(Phot) Luron Wright



● *Duty Fleet Controllers at work in Northwood*



Vulcan takes breath away

IN CLASSICAL times, the festival of Vulcan was traditionally celebrated on August 23. In 2010 the Volcanalia definitely took place on July 10.

The great Avro Vulcan V aircraft took to the skies over Somerset on Yeovilton Air Day; and the tremendous roar of her engines drew a hushed respect from the watching crowds of 30,000 as the delta-winged veteran of the Cold War arced gracefully across the blue heavens.

Many of the audience had hoped to see the great bird in action last year but hydraulic problems had stopped the bomber from getting aloft; this year there was no disappointment, only delight.

As one spectator commented as the veteran pulled off an astonishing display: "It was rather like watching Bruce Forsyth take to the floor again for one more dance."

Although she may be a little offended by the comparison, as the Vulcan is only in her 50th year...

Of course, the Vulcan was not the only draw for the throng, who filled the Naval Air Station's grounds, with fixed-wing and rotary-wing displays running throughout the day.

Yeovilton's own Black Cats Lynx helicopter display team showed off the agile nature of their craft; and the Red Arrows did what the Red Arrows do best, leaving the sky streaked with lines of coloured smoke and the audience admiring.

There was also plenty down on the ground to vie for visitors' attention, with static displays of aircraft native and foreign, old and new. In one case very new as the Lynx Wildcat made its first public appearance at Yeovilton.

The jets of the F-16 Falcons were out in force overhead – if you missed the Belgians, next up were the Dutch, and if you somehow were looking in the wrong direction (and deaf) when their fighters roared overhead, the Danish contingent wasn't far behind.

And by the way, if you're a parent thinking about taking little 'uns to Yeovilton Air Day next year, ear-defenders are always a good idea.

The roar of the aircraft was often greeted by an echoing wail of infants; which was rapidly dampened by the sight of the aeronautics overhead.

But as loud as the jet engines might be, it is the explosive finale of the Commando Helicopter Display that demands full attention. The Commando Helicopter Force joined with their Fleet Air Arm brethren to show off with full pyrotechnic dazzle, and pull the day to a dramatic conclusion.

Brigadier Mark Noble, Yeovilton's Commanding Officer said: "I think it has been an amazing success.

"We have put on an impressive flying display and from feedback so far I think people have enjoyed themselves. My personal highlight has to be the weather, as the sunshine allows everyone to enjoy whatever they would like to do."

For the Brigadier the event was a double success, as it also celebrated his respected air base's 70th birthday and position within its local community.



Pictures: LA(Phot) Vicki Benwell

Heron heralded

SEVEN decades of aviation deeds – and sacrifice – were remembered in June when the Navy's largest air base marked its 70th birthday.

It is 70 years since HMS Heron was formally commissioned as a fighter station for the Royal Navy's air arm.

Since then the air base has grown to one of the largest and busiest military airfields in Europe. It's presently home to in excess of 100 aircraft, including the Lynx and Commando helicopter forces, plus more than 4,000 personnel.

Some 250 of the latter marched through the streets of Yeovil on Thursday June 17 (one day short of the actual 70th birthday).

It was the largest parade by military personnel in the Somerset town since Yeovilton sailors and commandos marched in 2007 to mark the 45th anniversary of receiving the freedom of Yeovil.

"June 18 doesn't just mark the air station's birthday, it also marks 70 years of a very strong relationship with the community," explained the air station's executive officer Cdr Tim Ferns.

"Right from the very start in 1940, when the first personnel arrived and were billeted with the local vicar, HMS Heron has enjoyed fantastic support from the people of Yeovil and surrounding areas, who have not only put up with their noisy neighbour, but have welcomed, helped us and worked with us, either on the airfield or in the local industries that support what we do.

"We hope this relationship will continue on for many years to come."

Personnel from the Commando Helicopter Force, many recently returned from Afghanistan, marched in desert combat kit. They were accompanied by the Band of the Royal Marines from CTCRM in Lympstone and a platoon from the Sea Cadet Corps.

After a short service led by the Rev Howard Davenport and a flypast of Yeovilton aircraft, the platoons, led by Brigadier Noble stepped off.

The Guard was inspected by the Mayor, Cllr Phillip Chandler and the air base's CO Brig Mark Noble.

Brig Noble said: "The air station has played host to many squadrons and aircraft types over the decades and to the men and women that fly, service, repair and support them.

"It is now the size of a thriving small town in its own right, with some 4,400 uniformed and civilian staff working together, but it has always been a key part of the local community.

He continued: "I am very proud of the close bonds we have formed with the people of Yeovil over the years. Many of my people have made their homes in Yeovil and the local area.

"Wherever they are in the world, the men and women of RNAS Yeovilton are proud to have local support and an event like the Freedom Parade gives us the opportunity to show our thanks."

After the parade there was a reception for all participants, including police and town councillors, followed by a buffet lunch.

PEOPLE

Gannet customers well on the mend

TWO 'customers' of the Search and Rescue service at HMS Gannet have been reflecting on their experiences.

Both Jacqueline Oliver and Sandy Brownlie had cause to celebrate the arrival of the distinctive red-and-grey RN Sea Kings when they found themselves in difficulties.

In Jacqueline's case, the Gannet team were lifesavers.

As the Icelandic ash cloud rolled in, grounding flights in UK air space, her life was in the balance as she suffered a ruptured aortic aneurysm in her chest.

The 46-year-old mother-of-two from Cupar in Fife needed to be flown to the Heart Hospital, part of University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust for emergency medical care.

She was one of the few people to take to the skies that day as the helicopter dashed south.

"When she came to us she was extremely sick – dying basically," said John Yap, consultant cardiac surgeon at the Heart Hospital.

"If she hadn't been able to fly here she would not have survived."

"We just flew as fast as we could and hoped that we would get her there safely," said Lt Al Hinchcliffe, pilot and duty aircraft captain, adding that air traffic controllers cleared air space for the Sea King as it made its way to a landing site in Regents Park.

With the patient delivered, exceptional permission to fly was expired and the crew landed at RAF Northolt then returned to Scotland by road – their aircraft was back a week later.

Sandy Brownlie's plight was not quite as desperate, but a year after the incident the 63-year-old travelled to Gannet to deliver his thanks – and a gift of a bottle of Deerstalker whisky – in person.



● *Above: Sandy Brownlie (right) with CPO Daz Craig and Sandy's walking partner David Sievewright in front of the helicopter which rescued Sandy; (right) Obi Agu, consultant vascular surgeon, John Yap, consultant cardiac surgeon, and Jacqueline Oliver at the Heart Hospital in London*

Sandy had fallen 30ft while walking with a friend in the Trossachs, breaking his leg.

In particular, Sandy was keen to thank CPO Daz Craig, the duty team's paramedic and winchman on the day.

Sandy said: "Boy was I glad to see the big red helicopter coming towards me. I was so glad that the crew was quickly with me.

"I was in quite a lot of pain and was glad to receive some morphine from the Darth Vader-like figure who came to my aid.

"This turned out to be Daz, but when I first saw him he still had his helmet on and it looked like a bit of a *Star Wars* moment.

"I have nothing but praise for him and the crew and the way they helped me."

The helicopter had been training in the area, but the rescue was far from straightforward – Sandy had fallen in a heavily wooded area, which meant the helicopter had to hover much higher than normal and Daz and the stretcher had to be threaded out of the trees and winched up around 150ft.





● *POPT Ken Rutherford*

Ken bows out after 49 years

A MULTI-talented sportsman has retired after almost half a century of service with the RN and RNR.

Ken Rutherford joined up at HMS Ganges in 1961 as a 15-year-old, and was soon making his mark as he represented the training establishment in shooting competitions.

Over the following 25 years he saw service in Aden and the Malacca Strait (HMS Centaur) and the Gulf (Puncheston), and represented various ships and establishments at football, rugby, rowing, cycling and athletics, amongst other sports.

He also bumped into John Lennon and Yoko Ono on their wedding day in Gibraltar, and hosted Peter Sellers at a cocktail party in Mauritius.

By now re-trained as a PTI, Ken left the Navy in 1986, but he never slackened his pace, throwing himself into a new career with the RNR, both in uniform and as a civilian.

During this time, as a British cycling coach, he coached Olympic champion Victoria Pendleton, and he organised the Maritime Reserve field gun crew for the Brickwoods competition.

Ken bowed out in June at the age of 63 years and 11 months, and rounded off a distinguished career by attending a royal garden party at Holyrood House last month.



● *AET Colleen Campbell*
Picture: LA(Phot) Darby Allen

Colleen engineers medal win

A ROYAL Naval engineering school hosted the national finals of the UK Skills Aeronautical Engineering competition which saw military personnel and civilians go head-to-head in a series of challenges.

Two sailors took part in the competition, hosted by HMS Sultan in Gosport, which trains air and marine engineers for the Royal Navy.

AETs Colleen Campbell and Mike Purcell serve at RNAS Yeovilton, and 23-year-old AET Campbell, from Glasgow, returned to Somerset with a gold medal after competing in six tasks.

"It was quite challenging in some respects, and I was up against five other people so there was a lot of pressure to beat them," she said.

The event sees the winners entered into a selection pool for a place to represent the UK at the World Skills competition in London in October.

Budding engineers from schools in Scotland gathered at Clyde Naval Base's Off-Site Centre for the Young Engineers' RN Challenge.

Organised by Captain Naval Recruiting, the event gave pupils from 13 schools the chance to learn about engineering and the opportunities offered by the Navy.

Almost 90 children aged from 14 to 16 took part in a challenge centred around realistic disaster-relief scenarios, such as restoring power to a hospital hit by an earthquake or clearing rubble from a vital supply route.

Offices were used for planning, then skills were demonstrated on two giant models using materials such as string, wire, drinking straws and cardboard.

Award for Brad

A CANADIAN officer has received an award from the Mayor of Fareham in recognition of his contribution to his adopted town.

Lt Cdr Brad MacEachern was presented with the HMS Collingwood Award by outgoing mayor Cllr Ruth Godrich at the mayoral inauguration ceremony.

Brad is on a three-year exchange at Collingwood's Warfare Training Group, and he and his family take an active role in the community, particularly through the Locks Heath Free Church.

Emergency serviceman

BREAKDOWNS, pirates – it's all in a day's work for Alan Van Gorph.

And the RN Reservist took part in the third annual Uniform to Work Day to help draw attention to the role played by Reserve Forces in daily life as well as on the front line.

When he is not saving motorists in distress on the road AA patrolman Alan Van Gorph is a petty officer Royal Navy Reservist with overseas experience on counter-piracy operations.

His main day job takes him throughout the South West in his distinctive yellow van, while his second sees him based in Plymouth at HMS Vivid.

While both jobs offer him variety and challenge, it is the naval role which took him overseas.

Alan has been compulsorily mobilised abroad for 12 months to give advice to merchant shipping in distress due to piracy

He said: "I joined the RNR 17 years ago because I wanted something else to do, something useful and challenging.

"The Navy has certainly given me everything I expected.

"I was mobilised in 2007-08 to serve in the Far East.

"My specialism is maritime trade operations, so I advised and helped out merchant shipping when they got into trouble with pirates off Somalia and in the Red Sea.

"It was a bit like being in the AA in that respect – helping out those on the move."

Alan said his employer is very understanding about allowing him time to undertake RNR work: "I must thank my AA managers for their flexibility in allowing me to fit in RNR duties when it is needed.

"I would certainly recommend RNR membership which had benefited my work for the AA – I have learned leadership and first aid and firefighting skills which are all relevant."

Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox said: "On Uniform to Work Day we should recognise the sacrifices our Reserve Forces make on our behalf."

There are more than 45,000 reservists in the Forces, serving across the UK and overseas, including Afghanistan – 600 in the latter country alone, working in a variety of roles from chaplains to combat infantry soldiers.



● *RN Reservist Alan Van Gorph in his AA van*

Sharks gather for reunion dinner

MEMBERS of the Sharks, the former RN helicopter display team, are due to gather at the Wardroom in Yeovilton next month to mark the 35th anniversary of the team's formation.

Flying the Westland Gazelle, the Sharks operated between 1975 and 1996, bowing out the year before the aircraft was withdrawn from the basic flying training role in the Navy.

The team was drawn from the RN's helicopter basic flying training squadron, 705 NAS, based at RNAS Culdrose, and all the display pilots were helicopter flying instructors.

Training and performances at national and international air shows was done mainly in members' own time, raising the Fleet Air Arm's profile and promoting sponsoring companies.

The Sharks Breitling Reunion Dinner has been organised by former Shark Trevor Rieck, RAN (Ret'd), and guest of honour will be Rear Admiral Simon Charlier who, although not a Shark, carried out flying training with 705.

The event is being held by kind permission of the Wardroom Mess President at HMS Heron, Cdr Ric Fox – a member of the 1986 display team.

Around 100 people are expected to attend, including Gazelle aircrew who were not part of the Sharks team, such as the Pusser's pair display teams and competition squads.

And then there were three...

WHEN 18-year-old trainee sailor Conor Lovett marched out on parade to celebrate the completion of his training, his two brothers knew exactly how he felt.

Because Chris, 20, did the same thing three years ago, while 23-year-old Kieran followed his brother through HMS Raleigh last year.
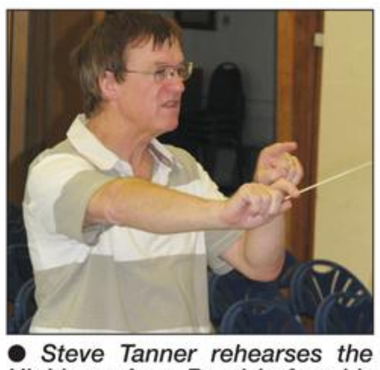
Chris is now at HMS Nelson in Portsmouth while Kieran is serving in aviation training ship RFA Argus.

Also there at the Torpoint basic training establishment were parents Gina and Mark.

Conor, who comes from Southminster, in Essex, said he enjoyed the training, and will miss the mates he made over the nine-week course.



● *Trainee warfare specialist Conor Lovett (centre) with brothers ET Chris Lovett (left) and AET Kieran Lovett* Picture: Dave Sherfield



● *Steve Tanner rehearses the Highbury Area Band before his final concert as musical director*

Concert is coda for Steve

STEVE Tanner is a busy man, with plenty of calls on his time.

So something had to give, and that something was one of the top youth bands in Hampshire.

But the only reason Steve (58) felt he could relinquish control of the Highbury Area Band (HAB) was because he felt it was passing to a safe pair of hands.

Steve is a former Royal Marines bandie, having spent 24 years specialising in flute and saxophone as he worked his way up to the rank of band sergeant.

Along the way he spent time with the band on the Royal Yacht on and off between 1977 and 1989.

"I really enjoyed that – the places you travelled to were marvellous, and we had a couple of Royal honeymoons as well. But the cruises to the Western Isles were the best ever…" he said.

As the end of his military career loomed, so Steve looked into the teaching side of his life's passion.

"In my last three years in the RM Band Service I became an instructor for the volunteer band at HMS Nelson," he said.

He also explored the teaching profession, and by the time he left the Band Service he was ready to make the step to enthusing youngsters with his love of music; he now works as a peripatetic music teacher in Hampshire specialising in woodwind instruments.

Another commitment he picked up as he left the Royals in 1989 was that of musical director of HAB, formed at Highbury Junior School in Portsmouth in 1976.

Now, 21 years on, the conductor's baton has been passed to his deputy, long-time band member Richard Horn, with Steve leading the band for the last time at their summer concert.

"This is a high-standard band, and lots of members of HAB have also been members of Hampshire county musical ensembles, some getting as far as national ensembles," said Steve.

"It has always had that quality, and I have tried to keep that standard up. They have a terrific reputation for young players."

Steve said he will remain involved with HAB as far as other commitments allow – he is still a gigging musician at functions, holiday camps, theatres and special events; he is a key member of the Royal Marines Association concert band and Petersfield Orchestra, and directs other bands and school ensembles, including the Solent Symphony Orchestra and HumDrum AmDram.

Several former members of HAB have gone on to join military bands or to study music at top universities and conservatoires.

Look – we're on TV...

THE BBC's *Countryfile* has been down to Dartmouth to find out about the maritime training that is carried out on the river.

On a glorious Saturday morning the production team were working with staff and students from the Navy's officer training college to put a piece together to commemorate the D-Day landings of 1944 and the tragic story of Operation Tiger at nearby Slapton Sands.

Presenter Matt Baker may be carving out a new career for himself, but to a number of the New Entry cadets on the river that morning he will always be the 'action man' presenter from *Blue Peter*.

Matt was interested to hear about all the activities the cadets were doing, and was surprised when he was told about their varied backgrounds before they joined the Royal Navy.

A three-man crew from the Initial Warfare Officer Course took the BBC team out on to the river in a picket boat, which allowed Matt to try his hand at some basic ship handling.

They then transferred to a motor whaler in order to perform a 'man overboard' drill.

Cdr Jeff Short, the Training Commander at Dartmouth, spoke to Matt on board Hindoustan, the college's static training ship, explaining the importance of the maritime training environment available at BRNC.



● *Countryfile's Matt Baker chats to an officer cadet at Dartmouth*

Picture: OC Lee, Vanguard Division

Cdr Short said: "The cadets were so enthusiastic when they spoke to Matt that the whole production team went away with an incredibly positive impression of Britannia Royal Naval College and the Royal Navy.

"We are hoping they might come back to film other facets of our training and its relevance to the wider countryside."



... on two different BBC shows ...

THE TV spotlight was back on Dartmouth when flagship BBC programme *Antiques Roadshow* set up at the college.

The programme's experts set up under parasols on the parade ground and surrounding ramps and welcomed more than 1,500 people eager to identify a hidden treasure or answer some nagging questions about an heirloom.

After months of technical, logistical and security planning the large team which makes up the show were delighted when the Devon sun shone brilliantly on the day of filming allowing everyone to remain outside.

Presenter Fiona Bruce *(pictured, left, by Craig Keating ofVT Flagship)* was pleased to be in Devon: "It is such a beautiful setting, although I know it has been quite complicated getting everyone here."

As Fiona walked around the parade ground area with a busy filming schedule staff, officer cadets and members of the public were delighted to be able to speak with her and get photographs taken with her.

Commodore of Britannia Royal Naval College Cdre Jake Moores said: "Without doubt BRNC is a beautiful setting for the *Antiques Roadshow* and we were very happy to have them in the College.

"Alongside all the antiques we were able to demonstrate our modern day purpose too."

Any gems or oddities unearthed during the day's filming will not be revealed until the show is broadcast during the autumn series.

... while we're on ITV (sort of)

FIVE sailors from Clyde Naval Base travelled south for an old-fashioned street party – but it wasn't just any old street..

This was one of the most famous streets in the world – Weatherfield's Coronation Street.

The trip was part of *The Sun* newspaper's Armed Forces Day celebrations, where they called on members of the Royal Navy, Army and RAF to head to the TV soap's set in Manchester for a right old knees-up.

Lt Paul Mulroy, WO Robert Wilson, CPO Blue Deacon, LOM Mick Hughes, Logs Tommy Tucker and ET Rocque Fernandes all represented the Naval Base at the event, getting to meet members of the cast.

"It was great to be able to brush shoulders with the stars," said Lt Mulroy, 41, who lives in Helensburgh with his wife Niki. "In addition to a tour of the street, there was a typical street party buffet which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

"The party was the perfect opportunity to show our appreciation for all members of the Armed Forces, in particular those in active service across the world," he continued.

"I can think of no finer setting to get our message across than the great British institution that is *Coronation Street*."

Lt Mulroy and the others got the chance to meet soap stalwarts such as Bev Callard – who plays Liz McDonald – and the soap's longest running actor, Bill Roache, who plays Ken Barlow.

The servicemen also took the opportunity to star in front of the cameras during the visit, helping to celebrate *Coronation Street*'s 50th anniversary, which is due to be screened later this year.



● *Lt Mulroy (bottom right) and some of the other Armed Forces participants enjoying the Coronation Street party*

Deep space meeting

ONE member of the most recent Space Shuttle flight took time out from his programme of events in Portsmouth to call in at the RN Submarine Museum in Gosport.

Stephen Bowen was one of the Atlantis flight crew who spoke of their experiences to schoolchildren and interested groups in Portsmouth *(see right-hand column)*.

And Stephen, a US Navy submariner, was greeted by JJ Molloy, former deep and now technical services manager at the museum.

Stephen, who described the collection as "amazing", and JJ swapped dolphins – the astronaut's badge had been below the waves and into space.

Historical changes

THE head of the Naval Historical Branch, Capt Christopher Page, has retired after more than a decade at the helm.

The branch, established after World War 1, is the repository of the Navy's operational history and has many priceless documents and maps among its archives.

But far from being a museum or library, it exists to provide a historical perspective on current operational matters.

Capt Page said: "The purpose of the branch is to provide advice drawn from the lessons of history.

"Nothing is ever completely new. Something similar has always been done, or tried."

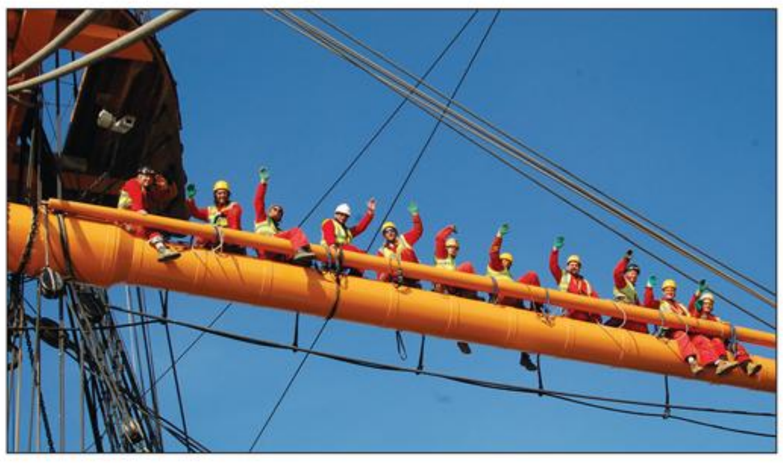
He added: "Senior officers coming through the Service now are all very enlightened about the value which this historical perspective provides."

Capt Page, a naval engineer who served in the Royal Yacht, is a naval historian – he wrote *Command in the Royal Naval Division*, a biography of Great War hero Brig Gen A M Asquith.

The new head of the branch, located in Portsmouth, is Stephen Prince, a historian in the department since 2001.

Stephen is a former lecturer at BRNC Dartmouth and Staff College Shrivenham, specialising in joint operations, and worked as a staff officer in Afghanistan in 2006.

Visitors thrilled with days of (ab)seil



VISITORS to one of the major attractions in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard have been treated to an extra spectacle in recent weeks.

Maintenance workers from ABFAD Ltd have been abseiling down the masts and swinging through the rigging of HMS Warrior in their bright orange working clothes *(see picture left)*.

The firm has been involved in the coating of the masts, fighting tops and platforms, funnels, ventilation cowls and hull.

Alan Fada, ABFAD company director, said: "We are used to working at power stations, shipyards and industrial sites, so to come here to Warrior is a pleasure and we truly look forward to it.

"Everyone on board, the local people and the visitors to the ship have been so nice, asking the lads lots of questions and are really very interested in what we are doing.

"Working on board Warrior is an all-round nice experience.

"The new lads, working here for the first time, have all said it's the best job they have ever done."

The work will help ensure Warrior, the RN's first ironclad warship, looks her best in December, when she will celebrate her 150th birthday.

Culdrose stalwarts move on

LONG-serving members of various departments at RNAS Culdrose have decided to call it a day.

One member of Culdrose's air traffic control team has retired after 38 years of service.

PO Graham Robinson joined the Andrew in 1972 as a trainee aircraft handler, and is believed to be the last of a generation of handlers who cross-trained in air traffic control, making the switch in 1987.

He has served on the flight decks of such ships as HMS Ark Royal, Bulwark, Hermes and Invincible, and did a tour of duty in Bosnia.

Close behind Graham in terms of service is Geoff King, Operations Officer with 750 NAS, having managed 35 years with the RN – and 28 with the squadron.

Geoff joined up as a 16-year-old Radio Electrical Mechanic (Air), starting with Buccaneers, and after eight years in he began his flying career in 1973 as a missile aimer on Wasps.

Geoff subsequently flew in Sea Princes, Sea Devons, Sea Herons, Wessex helicopters and Jetstreams, joining 750 NAS in 1983 as a navigation analyst.

After a spell in Ark Royal he returned to 750, and even leaving the Service didn't break the link, as he rejoined as a MOD civil servant, finally leaving with over 6,000 flying hours in his log book.

Also bowing out at Culdrose is a king-pin of 849 NAS's engineering department.

Senior maintenance rating WO Richard 'Taff' Thomas leaves the Navy after 32 years, during which time he worked on Wessex helicopters as well as Sea Kings.

Taff handed over to WO Nikk Lovelock-Jeffels just before the squadron embarked in HMS Ark Royal for the Auriga deployment.

Past and future

A NEW exhibition at the Mary Rose Museum looks at how Tudor Portsmouth was represented on maps.

The exhibition brings together important maps from the British Library, UK Hydrographic Office and Admiralty Library, including what is believed to be the earliest scale map of an English town (from 1545), two Elizabethan maps of the Solent and a chart of Portsmouth Harbour which, according to University of Portsmouth expert Dr Dominic Fontana, could pre-date the Armada of 1588.

The exhibition runs until October 17.

And looking ahead, there is a chance that a piece of the warship may voyage through space.

The parrell – a 3in wooden ball-bearing – was presented to the crew of the space shuttle Atlantis when they visited Portsmouth.

It will be taken back to Houston in Texas in the hope that it might make it on to a future flight.

This is not the first connection between the revolutionary warship and the space programme.

Michael Foale, the first Briton to walk in space, was a volunteer diver on the Mary Rose project.

Bear details

CHIEF Scout, TV star and RNR Honorary Commander Bear Grylls celebrated his 36th birthday on board submarine HMS Vengeance.

The adventurer was in the area and visited FOSNNI Rear Admiral Martin Alabaster, who offered him a tour of the base – including a visit to the boat and the chance to meet Royal Marines from Fleet Protection Group's Boat Troop.

Bear was impressed by the adventurous training efforts of the boat's Port crew; six have qualified as mountain leaders, a dozen skied in the 2010 championships and a team raised charity funds in the Three Peaks Challenge.



● *The smartboard in use at the Defence Maritime Logistics School at HMS Raleigh*

Picture; Dave Sherfield

PowerPoint gets smarter at Raleigh

A SULTRY Friday afternoon in Cornwall.

No air in the classroom.

The seat's uncomfortable.

The lecturer has a voice so dull that it would put Father Stone or Reverend Lovejoy to sleep.

We're now on slide 37 of 64 of a PowerPoint presentation about the art of potato peeling.

There's got to be a better way of teaching than this…

Well, according to the team at the Royal Navy's school of logistics at HMS Raleigh, there is… as 300 trainee writers, stores accountants, chefs and stewards (as they are now known once more) are finding.

There's now a dozen 'smart' classrooms (the name comes from the firm which devised the technology) at the Torpoint establishment to help logisticians through their training – and to make it easier for tutors to monitor their progress.

It is some time since the *Navy News* team were at school.

Back then blackboards, text books, dodgy Banda copies – like a photocopier but (a) not as good and (b) normally on brightly-coloured paper – were the order of the day, while computers were the size of a fridge and used for simple programming:

10 PRINT JOHNNY SMITH IS FAT

20 GO TO 10

Things have moved on a bit in two decades…

In simplistic terms, a smartboard is a computerised blackboard/overhead projector – with a huge touch screen.

Using special 'pens' you can write on the screen (in different-coloured 'inks'), circle or underline important sections of a document, scribble answers and so on.

Students also have 'smart responders' – it looks like a mobile phone/TV remote control and allows them to answer multiple-choice/yes-no questions (a bit like 'ask the audience' on *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*) or complete sums.

And for brainstorming sessions, sailors can write their thoughts and ideas.

A press of a button and it's all saved; no longer does a student scribble frantically, struggling to keep up with the teacher before the next slide appears.

Just for good measure, the smart training programme records the trainees' responses, so tutors can follow their progress throughout the course.

Raleigh's not invested in this kit simply because it's cool and Gucci.

There are sound scientific and educational reasons for investing in this smart technology (the revamped training has been devised in conjunction with cognitive psychologist Dr Adrian Banks from the University of Surrey who's keeping a close eye on the results).

"If I give you a list, you will remember probably no more than seven things," says Lt Stefan Gershater who's overseen the classroom transformation.

"Use interaction – it's a good thing – and you'll remember far more.

"Smart boards are sexy, but although they look like a big toy, there's a very good reason we're using them."

Indeed. The faster the sailors learn and the less admin and paperwork the tutors are saddled with, the more efficient training becomes – very important in these austere times.

"Sailors have joined a technically-advanced Service," explains logistics school commander Cdr Nick Dodd.

"We have to be at least as good as schools – but we're not a college of further education. Our aim is producing trained sailors for the Fleet.

"There's only one way to peel a potato, but there are different ways of teaching how you do it."

And good as smartboards are, well there's a place for whiteboards, notepads, photocopies. Even those slide presentations.

So no end to 'death by PowerPoint' just yet…

NFF is there for you

THE Armed Forces community has enjoyed a higher profile over the last few months, with the nationwide celebration of Armed Forces Day in June and heavy press coverage concerning the future of defence and the Budget, *writes Emma Prince of the Naval Families Federation*.

On the eve of Armed Forces Day, Prime Minister David Cameron acknowledged the "enormous debt that we owe to our Armed Services".

In the midst of all this coverage the NFF's aspiration remains the same: to voice the concerns and experiences of Royal Naval and Royal Marines' families, whether they are partners, children, parents or spouse...

To ensure we are kept up to date with current topics of concern the NFF has had a busy summer meeting personnel and families.

Over the last month we have travelled around the country to attend an admin day for HMS Montrose and families days for HMS Westminster, HMS Kent, HMS Gloucester, RAF Shawbury and at Royal Marine Poole.

We have also given briefings to HMS Diamond, HMS Gloucester and HMS Daring and visited Crossley Community Centre and the Cockleshell Community Centre, with many more visits planned.

These events allow us to talk face-to-face to families and personnel, getting a real flavour for hot topics.

We need to know about your issues and experiences to effectively represent you – so if you have a concern please get in touch.

In between meeting many wonderful families this summer we have also taken the time to round up some information that will be of interest to you:

■ *Pay Information*

A pay freeze for public sector workers has been announced in the Coalition Government's Budget.

The two-year pay freeze affects any public sector employee earning more than £21,000 a year.

The MOD has announced that around three-quarters of Service personnel (140,000) will be affected by the decision.

Anyone on a pay level of £21,000 or less per year (before tax) will receive at least a £250 pay increase in any 'freeze' year.

Andrew Robathan MP, Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, has commented on the matter stating that "most Service personnel" will still receive an annual increase in pay due to routine promotions.

It should be noted that the two per cent pay award for military personnel in 2010/11, which was announced by the Armed Forces Pay Review Body in March, will not be affected by the pay freeze.

In addition to these developments the Coalition Government plans to review Armed Forces pay in a fair pay review.

The former Defence Secretary John Hutton will also lead a review on public sector pensions, to report next year.

■ *Spending Challenge*

The public sector pay freeze is part of the Government's plan to reduce the national debt by taking action and reducing costs across the board.

Following the Emergency Budget, Prime Minister David Cameron launched the 'Spending Challenge'. This was an engagement programme, seeking ideas from the public on how to save money and deliver more for less, as they try to bring down the deficit.

The challenge was open to all members of the public and was your chance to shape the way government works.

The Government believes that the people who use our schools, hospitals, transport systems and other public services are the best people to comment on how to get more out of our services, while tackling the country's record deficit.

Ideas could be small-scale, but quick and easy to implement, or more radical, involving significant changes to the infrastructure.

All ideas will be considered by a cross-government team and the best ones taken forward to departments, the Treasury and the Cabinet Office before being reviewed by Ministers.

The exercise is designed to feed into the Government's 2010 Spending Review, which will be announced in October.

The Spending Challenge ran until the end of July.

■ *Access to Healthcare*

The NFF has been contacted by the editor of the NHS website, NHS Choices.

They have brought to our attention a new section that is dedicated to Service personnel and their access to healthcare, both home and abroad.

The site provides a wealth of information on healthcare in the forces and provides an insight into how the NHS and military medics work together.

There are details on accessing services, treatment pathways and useful contacts etc. Specific subsections focus on rehabilitation services, mental health, and healthcare for veterans.

The information on the site has been verified by the NHS and the MOD. To see what the site has to offer visit: www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Militaryhealthcare

■ *Tickets for Troops*

Tickets For Troops is a charity dedicated to offering free tickets for big events to Service personnel and their families.

They have recently announced a bumper giveaway of free tickets to major sporting events, theatre performances, music concerts, theme parks and cultural attractions throughout the country.

Tickets For Troops was set up last year and so far over 53,000 Service personnel have registered with the scheme and over 200,000 tickets have been generously donated by organisations and venues.

All serving military personnel, as well as any veterans who have been medically discharged through injury since 2001, qualify for tickets.

Visit: www.ticketsfortroops.org.uk to find out what's on and to register.

■ *Children's Drawing Competition: Win a Family Trip to London*

Victory Services Club and HMForces.co.uk are running a children's drawing competition, offering an all-expenses-paid trip to London for the family.

The prize includes accommodation in the Victory Services Club, located in the heart of London's West End, with fabulous days out and transport.

The competition is open to children of all ages to draw their experience of what life is like in the Armed Forces community – a great opportunity for you to see life through their eyes!

The prize is for up to six family members and the deadline for submissions is September 30.

For more information and entry details please visit: www.vsc.co.uk/family. Good luck!

■ *Contact the NFF*

If you have any comments on the issues discussed in this article, or would like to raise a matter of concern, please e-mail the NFF on: admin@nff.org.uk or telephone: 023 9265 4374. Postal correspondence can be sent to:

NFF,
Castaway House,
311 Twyford Avenue,
Portsmouth, PO2 8RN.

Big guns at HMS Drake

THE gun that was the star of the very last Command Field Gun Tournament at Earl's Court in 1999 has taken up a new home in the Warrant Officers and Senior Rates Mess at HMS Drake.

The final year of the tournament saw the Devonport team claim the victor's laurels, and claim the world record run time.

The retired field gun was presented to the Naval Base Commander Cdre Ian Jess, as trustee of the Mess, by the Field Gun Museum and Association's Linda James, and the Field Gun Association's chairman Grassy Meadows and president Mike Thomas (*pictured right*).



where to look

DEFENCE INTERNAL BRIEFS (DIBs)

52/10: Shaping a new Defence – Engagement exercise with the Armed Forces and Defence Civilians: Chief of the Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup, and Permanent Secretary Sir Bill Jeffrey have launched an engagement exercise inviting members of the Armed Forces and Defence civilians to feed in their ideas to the SDSR.

51/10: Secretary of State's Announcement on Afghanistan: The UK has agreed, following a request from the NATO International Security Assistance Force, to temporarily deploy 300 additional troops from the Theatre Reserve Battalion, 2nd Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, into central Helmand.

48/10: Supreme Court Judgment in the Smith Case: The Supreme Court has upheld the MOD's appeal in part, ruling that Article 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) does not extend to members of the UK Armed Forces carrying out military duties abroad outside UK bases.

46/10: Judgement in the Maya Evans Judicial Review: The High Court has ruled that UK forces can lawfully continue to transfer UK-captured insurgents to sovereign Afghan authorities.

45/10: The Spending Challenge – Engagement Exercise with Public Sector Employees: Following the Emergency Budget, the Prime Minister David Cameron launched the Spending Challenge, a wide-reaching engagement programme starting with public sector workers to share ideas on how to save money and deliver more for less.

44/10: Emergency Budget – Public Sector Pay Freeze: As part of the Government's Emergency Budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a two-year pay freeze from 2011-12 for public sector workers, except for those earning £21k or less, who will see a pay rise of at least £250 in these years.

DEFENCE INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTICES (DINS)

DIN 2010 DIN01-119: The Naval Service Mediation Policy for the resolution of workplace-based disputes and appropriate E&D complaints

DIN 2010 DIN01-120: Naval Service – merger of Regional OJAR Cells with Officers' Promotion Section (OPS) at Portsmouth

DIN 2010 DIN01-121: Armed Forces Muslim Association Conference and Families Day – July 31 2010

DIN 2010 DIN01-124: Restatement of Armed Forces Pension Scheme 1975 (AFPS 75) and Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) Regulations

DIN 2010 DIN01-126: RN Ratings/RM Other Ranks – Appraisal report on supersession of First Reporting Officer

DIN 2010 DIN01-128: Royal Navy Logistics Branch – Revision to specialist titles

DIN 2010 DIN01-129: Publication of Revised JSP 893 - Policy on safeguarding vulnerable groups

DIN 2010 DIN02-011: National Security Vetting (NSV) information on Human Resources Management System (HRMS)

DIN 2010 DIN03-014: Requesting support from the Joint Helicopter Command

DIN 2010 DIN03-015: Production of Memoranda of Understanding

DIN 2010 DIN04-113: Sonobuoys – RN Allowances/Annual training expenditure and revised accounting instructions (R)

DIN 2010 DIN05-041: Collocation of the Sea King Project Team to AgustaWestland, Yeovil

DIN 2010 DIN05-042: Management of Defence nuclear activities

DIN 2010 DIN06-018: Ballast water management for MOD shipping

DIN 2010 DIN07-088: Strategic leadership and management programmes at the Defence Academy for 2010/11

DIN 2010 DIN07-089: Volunteering for operational linguist duties

DIN 2010 DIN07-095: Media operations training 2010-11

GALAXY MESSAGES

GALAXY 2010-15 Personnel Functional Standards: Personnel Functional Standards have undergone a major review to incorporate recent changes in legislation, policy and the Service Personnel Command Paper.

GALAXY 2010-14 Revised procedure for the management of Service complaints at Level 1 in the Navy Command.

GALAXY 2010-13: Submarine mixed manning study

GALAXY 2010-12: Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR)

GALAXY 2010-11: Emergency Budget pay freeze and pension review announcement

ROYAL NAVY TEMPORARY MEMORANDA

Issue 08/10 No158/10: Combat System Certification

Issue 08/10 No 157/10: Recording of leave on JPA

Issue 08/10 No 156/10: MA in Intelligence and Security Studies commencing January 2011

Issue 08/10 Nos 154/10: HMS Ark Royal Silver Jubilee cocktail party, November 4 2010

Issue 08/10 RNTM 152/10: RN Ratings/RM Other Ranks – appraisal report on supersession of First Reporting Officer

Issue 08/10 Nos 151/10: HMS Sceptre decommissioning events

Issue 08/10 Nos 150/10: SGM 6413 – Preparation and selection for submarine command course

Issue 08/10 Nos 148/10: Merger of Regional OJAR Cells with the Officers' Promotion Section (OPS) at Portsmouth

Issue 08/10 Nos 145/10: Introduction into the Surface Flotilla of the Electronic Flubcon Report

Issue 08/10 Nos 144/10: Cessation of the Submarine Rating recruitment bounty – 'Recruit an OPPO'

Issue 08/10 Nos 143/10: The Association of Royal Navy Officer (ARNO) essay competition 2010

Issue 08/10 Nos 141/10: Military Task Equipment (MTE) on-load/off-load/accounting procedures for surface ships

where to look

1SL: 'What we do is in high demand'

IT WOULD be more than surprising if any British Serviceman or woman had missed the fact that we are in the throes of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) in parallel with the Government's Spending Review and its impact across the country.



● *First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope visits HMS Ark Royal at Halifax in Canada during the Auriga deployment*

Picture: LA(Phot) Gregg Macready

However the First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope is calling upon the men and women of the Royal Navy to make their voices heard and engage with the crucial process of review.

He is open about the issues facing the Ministry as a whole: "The Review will be conducted within the context of a difficult financial position, and the Government is committed to reducing MOD running costs by 25 per cent; and a challenging timeline, with the Review to report in the autumn".

The admiral has stressed: "apart from Op Herrick, there is no higher priority."

This sentiment was reflected in a recent speech by the admiral at the RUSI Maritime Conference.

"Afghanistan remains the priority for Defence. The campaign doesn't define Defence, but it must stay at the centre of our thinking, the focus for our joint operations, and our main effort until mission success – however that comes to be understood – has been achieved."

He went on: "Important as that campaign is, and I pause to pay tribute to the courage and commitment of those in that fight and recognise the enormous sacrifices made by our armed forces, we must not forget the range of other tasks, those not in Afghanistan, beyond contingent operations, that protect and promote the national interest."

Among those areas highlighted by the First Sea Lord were the protection of overseas territories, the stabilisation of other regions, and defending the air and sea space of this island nation.

He urged his audience of maritime and military experts to bear in mind three key observations:

"First, Defence is a team game, and we need to think in those terms";

"Second, maritime capabilities are not a luxury – they are a necessity";

"Third, our maritime forces are delivering today and they will have a vital role tomorrow".

The admiral painted a picture of the Navy's activity around the world, saying "What we do is in high demand."

He outlined the three principal threats identified by recent work by the MOD: terrorists and other non-state actors; hostile states; and where there is a national interest, fragile or failing states.

Admiral Stanhope said: "It also concluded that the operating environments of the land, sea, air, space and cyberspace will be contested, congested, cluttered and connected.

"Exactly where these threats may manifest themselves in the future is uncertain; but I should make the point that 85 per cent of the countries in the world have a coastline and the land-locked remainder can increasingly be influenced from the sea.

"Eighty per cent of the world's capital cities are within 150 miles of coastlines. By 2030, 65 per cent of the world's population – about six billion people – will live within this area."

The admiral went on to stress the Navy's experience and adaptability in this littoral zone; and the military's aim to act as a deterrent to prevent crises developing.

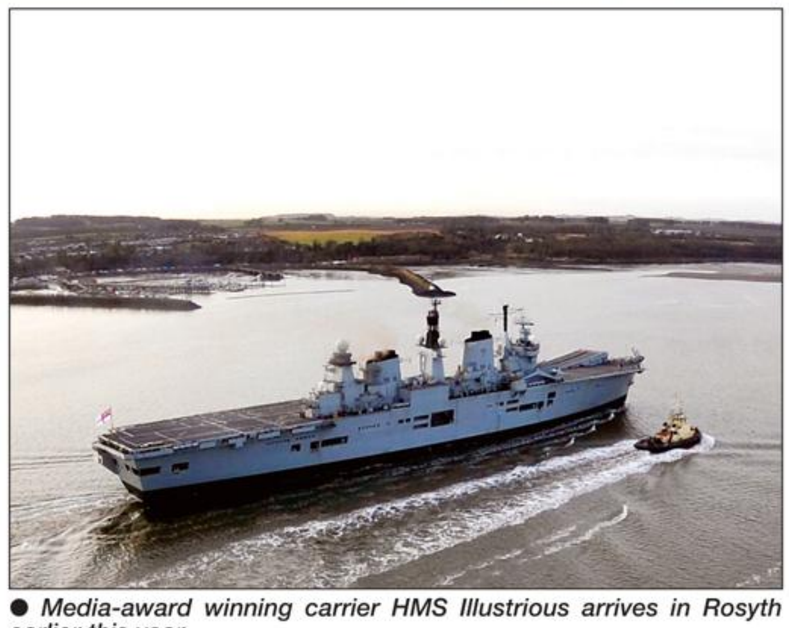
It is against the backdrop of this type of thinking that Admiral Stanhope is calling upon the men and women of the Naval service to follow closely and engage with the the SDSR.

He urged: "I cannot stress strongly enough the importance of RN/RM/RFA personnel engaging proactively, constructively and collegiately in this work."

The admiral also highlighted the need of the individual to keep engaged with the process, and use all of the official information sources available – defence intranet, MOD website, the RN web, the Royal Navy Message House and the Galaxy system.

In addition he warned: "It is inevitable that the media will draw their own conclusions on possible outcomes, but we should not regard such speculation as reflecting ground truth."

And the admiral's final message to his military audience tempered prediction with pragmatism: "We are entering uncertain times and, notwithstanding the strength of the maritime case, it is likely there will be some uncomfortable outcomes."



● *Media-award winning carrier HMS Illustrious arrives in Rosyth earlier this year*

Picture: LA(Phot) JJ Massey

Media savvy

CAN YOU take the crown from HMS Illustrious who has won the Desmond Wettern Fleet award for the last two years?

The deadline is looming for the submission of entries for the 2010 Desmond Wettern Fleet Award.

So if you think your ship, submarine, Naval Air Squadron or Royal Marines unit has achieved maximum positive media coverage of the Royal Navy in 2009, then why not submit an entry before summer leave?

Entries must be in hard copy format and supported by a citation of 500 words, don't forget to provide evidence too, this can be in the form of:

- Media strategy
- Media lines taken
- Press Releases
- Newspaper cuttings
- Magazine articles
- TV/Video clips
- Documentaries
- Radio
- Internet sites, web content, blogs

As well as the overall Desmond Wettern Award, there are awards for 'best entry in the frigate/destroyer category', 'best evidence of using the web', 'best entry in the small ships category' and 'best entry in the submarine category'.

The award, a cut glass ship's decanter mounted on a plinth of oak from the timber of HMS Victory, will be presented at this year's Maritime Media Award event on October 28, at the Institute of Directors, London.

If you want to get your hands on the trophy and celebrate your victory with a glass of port from its very own decanter (a tradition states the decanter is 'never allowed to run dry') then give it a go.

Submit your nominations in hard copy format, no later than September 24 to the News Desk, Fleet Media and Communications, Fleet Headquarters, MP 1-4, Leach Building, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO2 8BY. The telephone number for queries is 02392 628825.

For further information, please refer to RNTM 114/10 and good luck.

Up close and personnel

THIS year has seen a major update for the Personnel Functional Standards (PFS) – the Navy's way of defining the essential terms and conditions of service for its people.

The update has brought the standards into line with all the latest legal and policy changes.

While not a formal contract, the PFS do set a benchmark for the terms and conditions which the Naval Service is determined to meet.

However this ambition may sometimes be tempered by the problems of operational demands or pressure upon resources – but in this circumstance Navy Command HQ needs to know so that something can be done.

In order to assist this responsiveness, an improved reporting system has been brought in to make sure that Navy Command is best placed to respond wherever it can.

The key changes for PFS 2010 are:

- a change of assignment notice for non-squadded Junior Ratings from five to three months for shore to sea assignments, reflecting the reality of managing personnel within the context of current and anticipated future operational tempo;
- recognition of the Service Complaints Commissioner and revised service complaints procedures;
- an update to reflect the Armed Forces Act 06;
- increased opportunity for personnel in Phase 1 and 2 and trained strength personnel to participate in physical activity during the core working day; and that at least 20 per cent of unit personnel are to be provided the opportunity to participate in Adventurous Training or Challenging Activities each year;
- a new chapter detailing the major aspects of health promotion;
- the method of measurement of effectiveness has been reviewed to improve units' ability to report PFS status and Navy Command's ability to manage and collate evidence to target necessary change.

General queries about the system should be directed to:

- Cdr Fiona Fawcett RN – Fleet-DNPS PPOL WLB SO1 93832 5514
- CPO Logs(Wtr) Howard Taylor – Fleet-DNPS PPOL WLB CPO 93832 5516

New man at the helm as 2SL

VICE Admiral Charles Montgomery has now taken over as the Second Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Personnel.

His predecessor, Vice Admiral Sir Alan Massey, leaves the Royal Navy to take up the helm of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Admiral Montgomery joined the Royal Navy in 1973, and during his long career has commanded HMS Beaver and the Maritime Warfare School, HMS Collingwood.

His previous post was Naval Secretary and Chief of Staff (Personnel), where he was responsible for all policy and plans governing Naval personnel.

His new role gives him responsibility for all personnel and training issues; and ensuring that the Royal Navy has enough capable and motivated people.

The admiral recently visited frigate HMS Somerset in the Northern Arabian Gulf and has also been out to Afghanistan to meet the men and women of the Royal Navy and the green berets of the Royal Marines serving in these operational theatres.

■ *See pages 8 and 9 of Global Reach for these operational stories.*

Crucial to keep an eye on JPA

IT IS essential to make sure that your personal information on JPA is up to date and accurate, as has been outlined in recent RNTM 136/10.

This isn't only about you and your appraisal report, but it contains a record of your next of kin contacts.

It is also your way to make sure your 'souls on board' record has you in the right place. And that your careers manager knows what your preferences are.

Personal information is also used to underpin policies and procedures that rely on accuracy; and to keep track of people joining and leaving units, and training courses undertaken.

So rather than thinking of JPA in terms of the annual appraisal report, it is important to keep the personal information held in the system up to date throughout the year.

RNTM 136/10 includes a generic check form to be used by divisional officers to remind officers and ratings to keep an eye on specific data on JPA.

These forms, once complete, should provide a list of actions for the individual, or indeed anyone else in their reporting or career chain at varying times.

The optimum period for completing the check form is within two months of joining a new establishment, and no later than one month after the SJAR or OJAR has been finalised on JPA Appraisal.

There is a recognition however that these targets may not be attainable by some units ie in circumstances where JPA is 'offline' at certain times.

Although the majority of JPA data is owned by the individual, the divisional officer or first reporting officer is to undertake the review, and the unit management of this process should be undertaken by Unit HR.

On completion, check forms are to be retained by the divisional officer/first reporting officer either in soft copy or hard copy.

This form should be destroyed once it has been superseded or when the individual leaves the unit/establishment.

Soft copy records are preferred but, so long as the Divisional/Regimental Folder remains, a hard copy can be held.

All units are to keep a central record indicating the most recent date when each of their personnel completed this check – this will allow monitoring and checking of progress.

■ RNTM 136/10 supersedes RNTM 86/09: mandatory checking of personal information on JPA.

Changes to AFCS

A RECENT review of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme decided it was fundamentally sound, but that there were several areas identified for improvement.

Many changes required legislative changes and will be brought in by February next year; but several have been made quickly and become effective on the third of this month.

These include:

- extending the time limits for injury claims from five to seven years;
- extending the time limits for bereavement claims from one to three years;
- an increase in the maximum level of bereavement grant payable in the future to £25,000 for Regular Service Personnel;
- an increase in the above for Reservists who are not members of a reserve forces pension scheme to £37,500;
- an uplift of the majority of awards for hearing loss by one tariff level.

The MOD will revisit all claims made up to June 2012 to ensure that all claims reflect the changes from the review.

Previous claimants will be contacted by the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency to discuss their increased payment.

■ For more information see DIB 55/10, dated July 21 2010.

It's your 2-6, on page and TV

NEED to get your message across to the rest of the RN?

The *2-6 TV* DVD has been aligned with the Personnel Support Brief providing an enhanced package for use in sharing information.

Feedback received regarding the new-look *2-6 TV* DVD is encouraging. Your thoughts and opinions are invaluable.

Please forward any constructive ideas about what should be covered to WO1 Baz Cooke or Pauline Aquilina.

To feature in the *Navy News* 2-6 pages contact Lt Cdr Heather Lane or WO1 Cooke.

- **Lt Cdr Heather Lane, 93832 8809, FLEET-DCS-INFO-IC SO2**
- **WO1 Baz Cooke, 93832 8821, FLEET-DCS-INFO-IC WO**
- **Pauline Aquilina, 9621 85984**

NOTICEBOARD

Deaths

Mne Paul Warren RM. Charlie Company 40 Commando Combined Force Sangin. Killed in Afghanistan June 21. Aged 23.

L/Cpl Michael Taylor RM. Charlie Company 40 Commando Combined Force Sangin. Killed in Afghanistan June 22. Aged 30.

Sgt Steven 'Darbs' William Darbyshire RM. Alpha Company 40 Commando Combined Force Sangin. Killed in Afghanistan June 23. Aged 35.

Mne David Charles Hart RM. Charlie Company 40 Commando Combined Force Forward Operating Base Sabit Qadam and Patrol Base Sangin Tufann. Killed in Afghanistan July 8. Aged 23.

Mne Matthew Harrison RM. Charlie Company 40 Commando Combined Force, Sabit Qadam. July 13. Aged 23.

Mne Jonathan David Thomas 'Crooksey' Crookes RM. Charlie Company 40 Commando. Killed on foot patrol near Sangin in Afghanistan. July 16. Aged 26.

■ *More in-depth information about the above serving members can be found on page 7.*

The Reverend John Hill. Joined the Service 1994; his last ship HMS Ark Royal (2006-08) and last appointment as Chaplain to the King's Chapel, Gibraltar (2008-10). June 15. Aged 54.

Cdr Henry Hatfield. Joined the monitor Erebus, used as a training ship in Portsmouth, in 1938 then early in the war was sent as a midshipman to warship Malaya in which he directed gunfire for the first time 1941 (Operation Grog), the bombardment of Genoa (but lacking training he directed a shell into Genoa Cathedral). Post-war, as a hydrographer, he surveyed the waters of Cyprus, the Persian Gulf, Oman, the South Pacific, Fiji and the Solomon Islands. Between 1956-63 he commanded three survey ships, Scott, Cook and Dalrymple. He completed a rewriting of *Admiralty Manual of Hydrographic Surveying*, and later was seconded to Naval Intelligence. He used his professional surveying and amateur photographic skills to make a *Photographic Lunar Atlas* in 1968, which was available to the Apollo missions in 1969; and later built a spectrohelioscope, one of only two in Britain. Secretary, treasurer and president of the British Astronomical Association. April 1. Aged 88.

John Zopara Leo 'Shiner' Wright RM RVM. Served 40 years in the Royal Marines, 19 of these were as a musician aboard HMY Britannia. May 18.

John Nicol. Shipwright 1st class. Served 1939-45 as a Shipwright 3rd class in Valentine (lost May 1940 during the retreat from Holland to Dunkirk) and Vanity where he was badly wounded during an east coast convoy (1941). He took part in the cutting out expedition of the Italian liner Duchessa d'Aosta from Fernando Po in January 1942 and remained with the captured liner until drafted as a Shipwright 1st class to the anti-aircraft cruiser Vindictive. V&W Destroyer Association. June 8. Aged 91.

Robert 'Bob' A Dunningham. CPO PRI. Served 1957-78 at Raleigh, Dryad, Centaur, Apollo, Duncan, Charybdis, Ashanti, Bulwark, Penelope, Naiad and FOST Staff, Portland, June 13.

Sydney 'Sid' Sibley. Ldg/Seaman. Served in Faulknor 1941-45 and a member of the Association. May 31.

Albert Hawkins. PO Tel. Served in Faulknor 1939-41 then submarine service. HMS Faulknor Association. April 30. Aged 90.

Stan Mears. AB. Served in Bruce, Glasgow, Whitesand Bay, Harrier, Wakeful and Wave. Full member of HMS Bruce Association. June 9. Aged 79.

Christopher 'Paddy' Measey. CPO(S). Served in Eskimo, Naiad, Euryalus, London and Dryad. June 10. Aged 65.

Thomas W Yeomans. Stoker. Served 1939-50 in Coastal Forces (1939-45) and Scorpion in Korea (1950). June 22. Aged 88.

Ray Howarth. Served in Lochinch in the 1960s. April 19. Aged 67.

Francis 'Frank' Wade. Able Seaman. Served 1942-45. Ganges boy (1942) and on a coastal survey vessel in the Mediterranean (1943-45). July 4. Aged 84.

Peter Francis Guy. CPO FAA. Served 1947-70 in Albion, Terror (Singapore), Fulmar and RNAS Lossiemouth. July 2. Aged 80.

Roger 'Pedro' Pearce. Able Seaman GL2. Served 1960-70. Famed and renowned Loch Fada piano player and star of the Singapore dockyard canteen *Sods operas* (1965-66); also served in Berwick, Bulwark and Cleopatra. Loch Fada Association. June 11. Aged 65.

John 'Smudge' Smith. Seaman. Served 1953-64 in Implacable, Triumph, Daring, Tenby, Vigilant, Drake, Orion and Dolphin. HMS Tenby Association and Pendleton RBL. June 4. Aged 72.

George Chew. L/Seaman on board Peacock 1951-53. April.

Cdr Hugh Clamp VRD RNR. First ship Magpie 1950-51 then London Division RNR Ton=class minesweepers. July 5. Aged 82.

Thomas 'Tom' Stockton. ERA in Unicorn 1943-46. One of the first members to join HMS Unicorn Association in 1987. June 17. Aged 89.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

Frederick Evans. Wireless Operator. Served 1941-46 at Royal Arthur, Victory V, Scotia, Mercury, Attack, St Christopher, Hornet, Braganza, Midge and Martello and on MTBs in India and in Coastal Forces also with the Air Sea Rescue units; he was invalided out in 1946. Founder member and chairman of Nuneaton branch of the Burma Star Association and member of Nuneaton RNA. May 16. Aged 88.

Richard 'Dick' Bennett. Stoker. Served in the Far East during WW2; Drake and Scotia. West Ham RNA for 38 years. Aged 84.

Arthur William 'Bill' Smithers. PO TO. Served 1927-45 at Ganges then Marlborough (1928-29), Rodney (1929-30), Vindictive (1933-34), Revenge (1937-39); also Malaya (1941-43) which was damaged by torpedo and took a list of seven degrees but safely reached Trinidad and after temporary repairs continued to the New York Navy Yard for four months of repairs. Leaving for UK in July with an urgent fast convoy in which no ships were lost thereafter Malaya escorted convoys from UK to Malta and Cape Town until summer 1943. Resident of Pembroke House, Gillingham. RNA Chatham and former member of RNA Maidstone. Second oldest member of the Ganges Association. June 15. Aged 98.

Leonard Lawrance. Soham & District branch, formerly of Blandford RNA. June 4. Aged 87.

Margaret Park (née Osmond). Air Stores Wren. Served 1950-54 at RNAS Eglinton, Vulture and Wetherby. Windsor RNA from 1973 also Association of WRNS. Aged 79.

Louis Gordon Williams. Served in Fleet Air Arm at Sri Lanka air base and Formidable. West Bromwich branch secretary for over 50 years. April 9. Aged 84.

Ronald Leslie 'Les' Davies. POTGM. Served 1933-45 in Pembroke, Kent (1934), Sheffield (1937), Halcyon and Whitley (1938), Peregrine (1939), Hambledon (1941), Vernon (1942), Alecto and Dolphin (1943); and submarines Sealion, P511 and Strongbow. Recalled for Korea 1951. Middlesex branch of Submariners Association and Uxbridge RNA's oldest member. June 24. Aged 96.

Dave Perry. Leading Seaman RP2. Served 1949-54. Uxbridge branch. June 16.

Alfred William 'Alf' Fishlock. PO Seaman. Served 1936-50 at Ganges, Drake, Duke of York, Victory, Orion, Excalibur, Slinger, Tamar, Camperdown, Newfoundland and Unicorn. Appeared as Button Boy at the Royal Tournament. Volunteer worker for SSAFA, member of HMS Ganges Association and Chairman Wolverhampton RNA. April 15. Aged 90.

Frank Gordon Short. CPO(GI). Served 1929-53 at Ganges and Berwick, Vivid, Drake, Carlisle, Cornwall, Forth, Excellent, Euryalus, Victorious and RNC Dartmouth in the Pacific and Russian convoys. HMS Victorious 1941-45 Association, honorary member of HMS Victorious Association and active member of the RNA. June 6. Aged 97.

Leslie Charles 'Les' Blackett. FAA. Served in Warrior, Hermes, Ark Royal and a number of overseas postings; he was among the first draft to RNAS Culdrose. Falmouth RNA, Fleet Air Arm Association, Culdrose ex-Chiefs Association and a former chairman and later vice chairman of Penryn branch RBL. June 14.

Leslie John Sharp. Stoker Mechanic. Served 1945-48 on board Mull of Galloway, LST 50, BYMS 2043, Euryalus, Tyne and Carnarvon Bay. Henlow RNA. July 1. Aged 83.

Walter Joseph Bayley. Stoker. Served 1944-48 in Abercrombie, Aurora, Matchless and Steepholm. Soham & District RNA. July 2. Aged 83.

Robert 'Bobby' Foulkes. Gunner DEMS. Served 1940-46. Torpedoed and sunk three times within 72 hours whilst on convoy duty returning from Middle East 1941; finished the war in Cape Town. Keen sportsman and footballer. Llandudno RNA and committee member Conway British Legion. June 29. Aged 88.

Penelope 'Our Pen' Mortimer. Associate member Letchworth & Hitchin branch. Tireless collector with husband Les for numerous charities for more than 20 years. June 16. Aged 73.

John Corby. Fleet Air Arm. Former president Bourne RNA. July 10. Aged 71.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION

R L 'Les' Davies. PO TGM. Submarine service 1943-45 in P235, P511 and Strongbow. Dolphin and Middlesex branches. Aged 95.

W J N 'Bill' Dobson. CERA (MID). Submarine service 1940-45 in Tigris, Tribune, Unbending and Unrivalled. Blyth and Sunderland branches. Aged 95.

J 'Joe' Irvine. CPO Rel (MID). Submarine service 1941-53 in Tribune, United, Trident, USS Beaver, P S Dzik, Black Panther, U1105, Tradewind and Spiteful. Gosport branch. Aged 88.

G 'Gordon' Jesson. AB ST. Submarine service 1944-47 in Clyde, Vivid and Tantivy. Beds and Herts branch. Aged 84.

J 'John' Jones. Sto1. Submarine service 1942-44 in L26, L27, H43, P555, Thrasher and Trenchant. Merseyside branch. Aged 86.

J J 'John' Marett. LM(E). Submarine service 1959-63 in Seraph, Seascout, Alliance, Ambush, Tactician, Token and Ocelot. Hull branch. Aged 71.

J T 'Jeff' Powis. CPO MEM(M). Submarine service 1954-82 in Alliance, Sleuth, Truncheon, Oberon, Sealion, Otter and Ocelot. Gosport branch. Aged 76.

R 'Algy' Preston. ERA1. Submarine service 1953-61 in Sentinel, Talent, Seadevil, Tabard, Grampus and Trenchant. Medway Towns branch. Aged 78.

Lt J B 'John' Rae. Submarine service 1944-49 in Urtica, Templar, Auriga, Artful and Andrew. East Kent branch. Aged 85.

J 'Jim' Sowerby. AB ST. Submarine service 1941-46 in Sportsman, Thrasher and Trenchant. Hull branch. Aged 88.

A J 'Arthur' Williams. L/Sea TD1. Submarine service 1948-53 in Alcide, Sirdar and Scorcher. Merseyside branch. Aged 88.

R A 'Ron' Williams. Tel. Submarine service 1943-46 in Safari, Seadog and Taku. Merseyside branch. Aged 85.

J 'Jack' Woodhams. AB ST. Submarine service 1944-46 in Virulent, Urtica, Tireless and Tapir. Gosport branch. Aged 85.

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION

Surg Lt William Naunton. Served in Welcome. June 4. Aged 92.

Ken Taylor. AB. Served in Magicienne. July 5. Aged 83.

John Dunphy. AB. Served in Magicienne and Rowena. July 7. Aged 85.

LST & LANDING CRAFT ASSOCIATION

J E Winter. Served with LCA Flotilla 513 and on board LSI(H) Brigadier and LSI(L) Reina del Pacifico.

R S Clay. Served with LCI(L) Flotilla 250. April 12.

H Webb. Served on board LST 340 and with Task Force 31. January.

HMS BELFAST ASSOCIATION

Murray Ward. Stoker Mechanic on board 1950-52. A founder member of the Association. April 11.

Bernard Hissey. ME1 on board 1961-62. April 12.

Alexander Thomson. Able Seaman on board 1949-53. May 11.

Henry 'Harry' Cooper RM. An original crew member 1939. May 14.

Ernest Smith. Regulating PO on board 1961-62. June 19.

Trophy lives



THIS solid silver model of a roebuck – **Trophy 24075** – was originally presented to the fifteenth HMS Roebuck, the recently de-commissioned survey ship, in 1986.

In 1704 the eighth vessel of that name – an almost new 5th-rate 42-gun ship – was part of a fleet under the command of Admiral Sir George Rooke.

Less than a month after the capture of Gibraltar in July, Rooke received intelligence that a Franco-Spanish Fleet under Admiral Comte de Toulouse was approaching Gibraltar.

Leaving half his Marines to defend the newly-won prize, Rooke immediately set off with his combined English-Dutch fleet of 51 ships of the line to engage the enemy.

The outcome of the action that followed on August 13 1704, the Battle of Vélez-Málaga, was indecisive even though it was the largest naval battle of the War of the Spanish Succession.

Not a single vessel was sunk and only three French vessels were captured but the mutual battering sustained during a seven-hour battle left many ships barely seaworthy and casualties on both sides were high.

The two fleets subsequently approached each other later in the month but no further engagement took place.

The British had suffered the higher number of casualties and worse damage to their ships – particularly to masts and rigging, with Rooke's flagship Royal Katherine having lost a mast – and the French mistakenly interpreted the British fleet's prudence as an overall victory.

A British squadron under Admiral Byng had expended so much ammunition in the earlier bombardment of Gibraltar that he was obliged to quit the line.

Indeed, the Crown's decision to not grant Byng any future command reflected the view that the outcome of the battle was other than in favour of the British.

The French returned to Toulon and claimed a great naval victory.

However, the reality was that by retreating to Toulon they turned what had been a tactical stalemate into an Allied strategic victory; after the Battle of Vélez-Málaga the French Navy never again emerged from Toulon in full strength and no further attempts were made to recapture Gibraltar.

The Roebuck not only survived the battle but also lasted in service until 1725 when she was dismantled and rebuilt in a larger form at Woolwich Dockyard.

NAVY NEWS

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Ask Jack

Japanese surrender in HMS London: The ceremony of Japanese surrender took place on board HMS London in 1945 at Sabang; Gordon Bruty of HMS London Association is looking for photographs of the historic signing on the London captain's table. Can you help? Contact: Gordon Bruty, 6 Elmswood Close, Glenholt, Plymouth PL6 7JY, or tel: 01752 695516.

Malta: Does anyone remember seeing, reading about or just remember the rocket launchers on Corradino Heights in Malta between April and June 1942. Do you have pictures of the guns or rockets? I have a photo of the missiles floating down on parachutes over the harbour. I have only found one shipmate who saw them in Tobruk and two Maltese that can remember them in Malta. I have the log book of HMS Corradino (stone frigate) of that time given to me by Cdr Sanderson. The rest of the crew were Lt Gee, Lt Lambton Burn RNVR, AB P W Brown, Bullard, Anderson, W Salmon, E S Williamson, F G Bromham, T W White, D Buglar, D E Reeve-Tyler, G C Patience, J Softey, J Vermuyten and G Hart. If anyone has any information contact J A Rose on 01603 050 4179.

HMS Cleopatra Old Shipmates Association is actively seeking new members to join us from both the cruiser and the frigate. Wives/partners are also welcome. We have over 280 members and the subscriptions are only £6 per year. If you are interested in joining then contact the secretary Warwick Franklin at warwick_franklin@hotmail.com or tel: 01752 366611.

Royal Naval Electrical Branch Association: Many new members were welcomed to the Royal Naval Electrical Branch Association with the 'Amber Nectar' on our stand at the recent HMS Collingwood Open Day. This raised lots of questions from passers-by about the Rum Issue, the measure, language and 'currency' etc. Our plans for next year are to give a demonstration of Rum Issue and we are looking for a Lower Deck Rum Fanny and a Grog measure. Offers with condition and prices etc please to Mike Crowe at mike@rneba.org.uk or 7 Heath Road, Sandown, Isle of Wight. PO36 8PG. Pictures and credit will be put on our website www.rneba.org.uk. Many thanks. Coming to the Open Day next year? Come on round!

Port Dickson: Seeking anyone who served in the Royal Navy and was in Port Dickson in the 1940s, 50s and 60s, including members of the LST Club. I welcome photographs of their ships and Port Dickson during this period. Contact Poopalu Nagiah, 18 Main Road, Port Dickson, Negri Sembilan, 71000, West Malaysia.

RNAS Cowdrey Park: We are currently organising a reunion later this year for veterans of RNAS Cowdray Park, near Midhurst, or any WRNs from the Payroll Section of HMS Daedalus stationed at nearby Selham/Graffham from 1944-45. Please contact Tania Pons at selham.airfield@yahoo.co.uk or tel: 01730 812720 for further information.

HMS Lagan/Loch Fada: I am trying to trace any crew members of HMS Lagan and HMS Loch Fada who may have served with my late father, Temporary Lt Hubert 'Hugh' Boler DSC RNVR. I am researching my father's wartime naval career. If you can help contact David Boler at david.boler@googlemail.com or tel: 01732 770168.

HMS Wilkieston 1963-65 FE: Seeking A/B George Ward (aged 68-70 from Nottingham perhaps, his wife was Freda) my sea-daddy, whose oppo was LRO Dave Eggars. Please contact Richard Gleed-Owen at richardgleedowen@yahoo.co.uk or tel: 01623 631086.

MTB 622: Now that Harry Leader DSM has crossed the bar, I think I may now be the only living survivor of MTB 622 when the boat was sunk by gunfire on March 10 1943. The only names I remember of the other nine survivors are the CO, Lt Frank Carr DSC and Ldg Tel 'Dolly' Gray, who were prisoners of war. Alfred Solomon would be grateful to learn the names of any other survivors. If you can help, call me on 020 8647 7174.

SS Volendam: In August 1940, I was a six-year-old evacuee on the SS Volendam, sailing from Liverpool to Canada. To begin with we were in convoy with the Royal Navy (I would like to know the names and types of these RN ships). The Volendam was torpedoed by U-boat 60 after the convoy departed. The Volendam later became a troopship after she was towed to safety, where a second unexploded torpedo was found. If you can help contact Sandra Van Eeden (née Hidson) on 023 9275 4818 or write to 1 Artillery Terrace, Old Canal, Southsea, PO4 8JB.

HMS Sikh: My father Able Seaman Edward Walters was a survivor of HMS Sikh at Tobruk and a member of the association until he crossed the bar in 2006. Did any of the Ordinary Seamen write an account of what it was like when Sikh sank or about life in the POW camp in Italy? I believe he was in Campo PG70 or PA70, I have some cuttings from his local Burnley newspaper from his repatriation. I know my dad was sent to Cholmondely Castle in Cheshire to recover from the starvation. If anyone can provide me with more information could they contact Mrs Marion Bateson on 01772 822767.

Royal Naval Engineroom Association: is open for membership to all ranks, ratings, officers of the Mechanical and Electrical branches of the Royal Navy, past and present. Details from Bob Styants at bobstyants@btinternet.com or tel: 0121 422 4115.

Pussers Chefs: Old and new (or whatever they call you now). Could any serving Chef or retired Chef please send me the recipe for the delicious curry sauce I used to enjoy. Apart from the many curries consumed at sea, my family and I enjoyed a decent curry on a Sunday lunchtime at the Senior Rates messes at both Lee-on-Solent and Portland. Was it a special mix, secret blend, or did it come as powder from a catering size tin? If it was the latter, can anyone remember the name of the manufacturer? Hope you can help. Please contact philhillson@hotmail.com or write to 10 Cintra Place, Casebrook, Christchurch, 8051, New Zealand with more details.

Swap drafts

AB(CIS) J Poulter-Ward would like to swap from Faslane WMO to Portsmouth WMO. AB Poulter-Ward is due to be posted to the Faslane WMO from February 2011. Contact: AB(CIS) J Poulter-Ward, WHSS, RN Gibraltar, BFPO 52; or tel: 003 505 401 9546.

LET(ME) Chenneour of HMS Chatham would consider swap with any Devonport-based ship, deploying or not. Contact: 253-letme10@a.dii.mod.uk.

Assignments

Cdr Thomas G Sharpe to HMS St Albans as CO from September 2.

Lt Cdr Christopher M Baldwin to become Superintendent of Diving at Horsea Island from July 6.

Cdr Nicholas C Cooke-Priest to HMS Iron Duke as CO from November 2.

Rear Admiral Philip Mathias to be appointed Director Strategic Defence and Security Review Nuclear Programme Workstand from June 7.

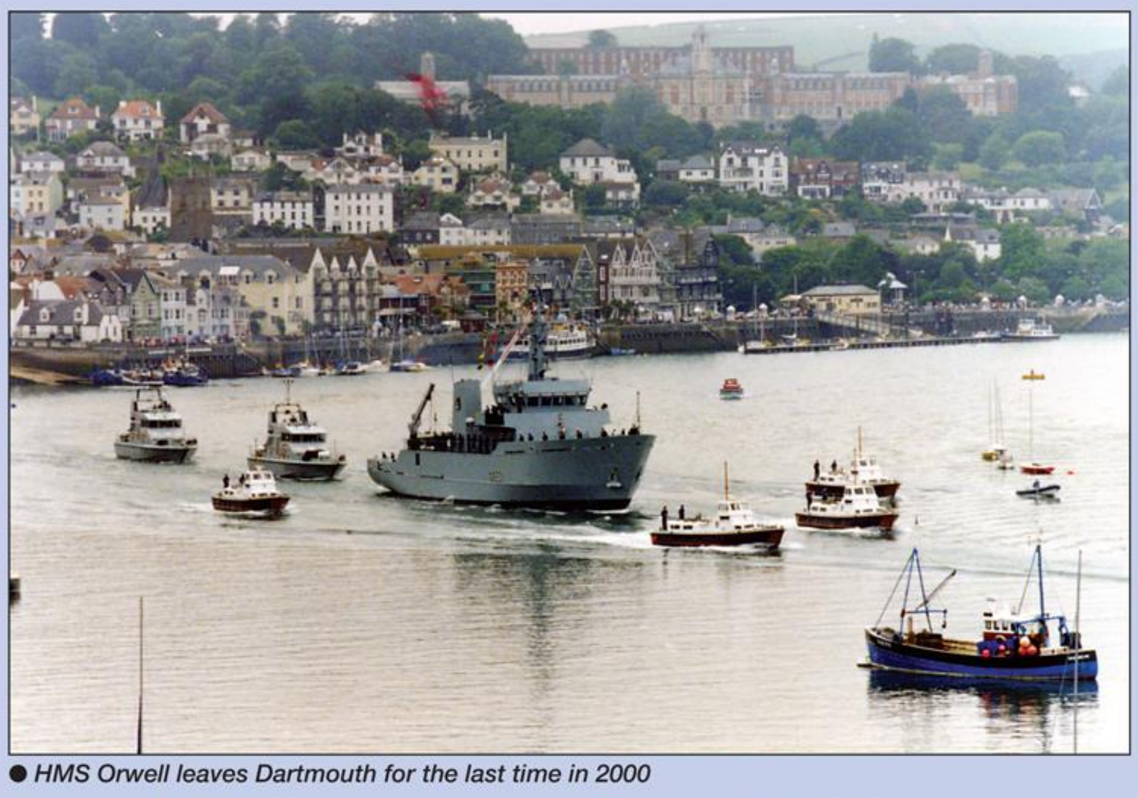
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Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number, or email patn-rec@hotmail.com. A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

1970 1980 1990 2000

We flick back through the pages of Navy News to see which stories were drawing attention in past decades...



● *HMS Orwell leaves Dartmouth for the last time in 2000*

August 1970

ADMIRAL Sir Michael le Fanu retired as First Sea Lord with a little apology to the Fleet.

Always a well-loved officer, his popularity was a little dented in some quarters because the decision to end the rum ration happened on his watch, with the last tot issued around the globe on July 31 1970.

Admiral le Fanu had been appointed Chief of the Defence Staff, but was never able to take up the post because of ill-health.

When he left Whitehall the admiral wrote a typically humorous message to the Navy:

"Most farewell messages try
To tear-jerk the tear from the eye,
But I say to you lot,
Very sad about tot,
And thank you, good luck, and goodbye."

August 1980

THE big draw at Portsmouth Navy Days was the new carrier HMS Invincible, which had been commissioned on July 11 in the presence of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh.

Portsmouth Navy Days, held over the August Bank Holiday weekend, also boasted HMS Intrepid, London, Norfolk, Birmingham, Cardiff, Diomede, Achilles, the submarines Sealion and Osiris, the survey ship HMS Herald, and the RFA Gold Rover.

Plymouth's star attraction was the high-tech frigate Broadsword, the submarines Spartan and Churchill, and a small fleet of destroyers, frigates and smaller ships.

At the 2010 Portsmouth Navy Days Invincible will still be seen, but the now retired carrier will play no active role.

August 1990

ONE of the oldest branches of the Royal Navy died with the retirement of Cdr SD(B) E W Andrew, the last serving Boatswain.

'Andy' Andrew had joined as a boy seaman in 1950 and was commissioned in 1963, becoming boatswain of the old Ark Royal, commanding officer of Wotton and Glasserton and seamanship officer to FOST.

The boatswains' branch was believed to have originated with the Saxon 'batsuen.' The boatswain had complete charge of masts, yards, sails and rigging, and was responsible for the training and discipline of all seamen.

By 1963 it was decided that the boatswain was obsolescent, although the need for the expert seaman was recognised in the creation of the Seaman branch.

August 2000

THE Navy's last remaining River-class vessel of the period, HMS Orwell, sailed out of Dartmouth for the last time flying her paying-off pennant and escorted by HMS Smiter, HMS Tracker, and a flotilla of picket boats from Britannia Royal Naval College.

Orwell, originally a Fleet minesweeper, had been converted to Navigation Training Ship and sent to Dartmouth to teach young officers navigation skills, a task which she carried out for six years.

At the time, young officers spent a week at sea, but under the new training schedule they were sent to sea for six months' specialist navigation training in warships, so ending an era of Dartmouth Navigation Training Ships which had begun in the 1920s.



● *The two models of HMS Decoy and HMS Daring made by Bryan 'Tiny' Height*

Decoy docks alongside Daring

MODELMAKER, and former Decoy man, Bryan 'Tiny' Height has carefully crafted 1:96 scale models of his onetime ship and her modern successor Type 45 HMS Daring (*pictured above*).

The two ships have been lovingly recreated to smaller scale – although the models are still almost six feet in length – and boast moving radars, guns and even the helicopter's rotor blades rotate.

The veteran did enjoy a visit to see the real Daring in full scale while working on his hand-crafted model.

Tiny, who spent 27 years in the RN, served on board Decoy from 1966-70, and is a keen member of the Decoy Association.

He said: "The Peruvians took over the ship in 1970 and modernised her – she served until 2007.

"She is now a museum in Peru – not bad for a ship laid down in 1946.

"She was a happy ship and we went all around the world on her."

Many of Tiny's memories are brought to life at the association's reunion. Tiny is pictured (*below*) alongside association secretary Malcolm 'Dobbo' Dobson dishing out the tot of rum at their Torquay reunion in April to an expectant Jim Harvey.

The next reunion takes place at Southport in April 2011; or for more details on the association, contact Dobbo on 01502 677396.



NOTICEBOARD

Reunions

AUGUST 2010

Royal Naval Photographer's Association: 90th anniversary reunion party & AGM is to be held in Bournemouth from August 27 to 29 (30). After the last very successful 'Weekend Reunion Package' a few years ago, very favourable rates have been negotiated at the impressive three-star Wessex Hotel on Bournemouth's West Cliff. The itinerary to celebrate 90 years since the branch was formed, includes Meet & Greet after dinner on Friday evening, Saturday AGM late morning followed by Up Spirits and drinks reception and gala dinner in the evening with live entertainment. All details of prices of the packages on offer can be found on the RNPA website at http://www.rnpa.info or in the 'hot off the press' Spring 2010 newsletter, which most ex and serving Phots will have just received. Please send your cheque for £25 per person deposit, made out to the RNPA, asap to: Ray Whitehouse, RNPA Social Secretary, Chilston Cottage, Ham Manor Way, Angmering, West Sussex, BN16 4JQ, tel: 01903 770906 or email: ray@chilston.com There will be a 5 per cent discount to all fully paid-up members. For membership and other enquiries please contact Danny du Feu at danny@ddf-photography.co.uk or tel: mob: 07966 258103 or 0116 2898725.

SEPTEMBER 2010

Bristol Avonmouth Sea Cadets: Were you a member of Bristol Avonmouth Sea Cadets (or Bristol Sea Cadets pre-1943) as staff, UMC or cadet? We would be delighted to see you (and guests) at our reunion to commemorate the Cadet 150 year. It also happens to be the 150th anniversary of Sea Cadets in Bristol so twice the celebrations. Any photographs, documents and memories of former shipmates would be gratefully received so that we can mount a small display on the night and to add to our website: http://units.ms-sc.org/avonmouth To attend the reunion on September 4, contact the Unit Chairman at avonmouthscc@btinternet.com or tel: 0117 982 3938 (answerphone).

Fleet Air Arm: Each year the Greater Manchester Branch of the FAA travel down to Portsmouth to hold a reunion service of Remembrance at Marine Parade, Lee on Solent. This year it will be held on September 8 at 1100. Everyone is cordially invited. Standards are very welcome. For more details contact Bernie Cohen at b.cohen2@ntlworld.com or tel: 0161 946 1209.

River Class Frigate Association: 25th annual reunion to be held at the Royal Navy Club, Leamington Spa on September 18. Muster at 1100, lunch 1400. Castle-class frigates, Flower-class corvettes plus other escort groups are all welcome – as they all did the same escort duties in convoys. Contact Ray Dodd, Clay Leaches Farm, Arlies Lane, Stalybridge, Cheshire, SK15 3PZ or tel: 0161 338 4298. It's Lt Cdr David Walsh (RN Rtd) 90th Birthday, so please do your best to muster.

Algerines Association Autumn Break: Seven-day break from Monday September 20 to Monday September 27th at Mill Rythe Holiday Park, Hayling Island. Full board £197 per person, plus entertainment. Please contact: George Patience, Algerine Reunion Organiser, tel: 01456 450659, M Hutchins, tel: 01903 766895.

OCTOBER 2010

Type 21 Association inaugural reunion: Just over 40 years from their conception, the eight Amazon class frigates of the Type 21 class now have an association. And the inaugural reunion will take place in Plymouth on October 8-9, when the association will be formally established. For more information contact Peter Mosse on 01730 829789 or visit http://type21club.ning.com/

Mauritius Veterans: Reunion for all those who served at HMS Mauritius (shore base) in the 1960s and 1970s. This will be held on October 9 in the WO & SR Mess, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. If you are interested in attending, please contact Tina Lowe at tina.lowe3@ntlworld.com or tel: 01329 843347.

HMS Victorious Association: Ninth reunion at the Britannia Hotel, Coventry from October 1 to 3. For details contact Stoker Stan Mclellan at stanley675@btinternet.com or tel: 0113 255 5562.

HMS Bristol Association will be holding a reunion on October 2 at the GI's Association Club at Whale Island. There will be an AGM at 18.00 followed by the reunion at 19.00. For further information visit www.hmsbristol.co.uk or email: peter.featherstone-williams@astrium.eads.net or contact Gary Whitmarsh on 07768 310880.

HMS Tireless 'Build' Reunion: The 25th anniversary of submarine HMS Tireless' launch will take place at HMS President over the weekend of October 8-10 2010. Further information and a full programme of events can be obtained from Graham 'Budgie' Burgess at DESShipsEBG-SMDC-Mgr@mod.uk or tel: 023 9272 3859 or Roly 'Jan' Lock at DESSMCS-PC4@mod.uk on 0117 91 33303.

Weapons Mechanician Association: Reunion from October 23 to 25 at the Bear Hotel, Havant. Contact Dave Crees on 023 9247 5100 or 07074 475100 or write to 24 Leigh Road, Havant, Hants, PO9 2ET.

NOVEMBER 2010

HMS Collingwood Association: Reunion and remembrance weekend at the Ambassador Hotel, Llandudno, November 12-15. All members and partners and especially new members welcome. Programme includes dinner and live entertainment every evening, coach trip on Saturday and remembrance service on Sunday. As always there will splicers! Visit our website at www.hmscollingwoodassociation.co.uk or contact Brian Cox at briancox9@blueyonder.co.uk or write to 8 Colesbourne Road, Cheltenham, GL51 6DL

MAY 2011

HMS Cleopatra Old Shipmates Association: Our 26th AGM and reunion is being held in Portsmouth from May 13 to 16. If you are interested in joining then contact the secretary Warwick Franklin at warwick_franklin@hotmail.com or tel: 01752 366611.

HMS Ruler/885 NAS: Reunion in Southsea from May 20 to 22. Details from Ted Restall at kathysturgeon21@hotmail.com (daughter) or tel: 0117 9327974 or 0117 9603477.

Contact sheet

Ministry of Defence: 0870 607 4455, www.mod.uk
Royal Navy recruitment: 0845 607 5555, www.royalnavy.mod.uk
Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, www.veterans-uk.info
RN and RM Service records: 01283 227912, navysearchpgrc@tnt.co.uk
Royal Naval Association: 023 9272 3823, www.royal-naval-association.co.uk
Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity: 023 9254 8076, www.rnrmc.org.uk
RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), www.rnbt.org.uk
British Legion: 08457 725725, www.britishlegion.org.uk
Naval Families Federation: 023 9265 4374, www.nff.org.uk
Seafarers UK: 020 7932 0000, www.seafarers-uk.org
SSAFA Forces Help: 0845 1300 975, www.ssafa.org.uk
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Medals enquiries: 0800 085 3600
Royal Naval Museum: 023 9272 7562, www.royalnavalmuseum.org
Fleet Air Arm Museum: 01935 840565, www.fleetairarm.com
Royal Marines Museum: 023 9281 9385, www.royalmmarinesmuseum.co.uk
RN Submarine Museum: 023 9252 9217, www.rnsubmus.co.uk
National Maritime Museum: 020 8312 6565, www.nmm.ac.uk
Imperial War Museum: 020 7416 5320, www.iwm.org.uk

Sports lottery

June 19: £5,000 – POET(AV) G M Bailey; £1,500 – Lt M J Hagger; £500 – Lt Cdr C I Maynard.

June 26: £5,000 – NA AH C Cherrington; £1,500 – PO(D) P R Wright; £500 – Sea B T Cook.

July 3: £5,000 – L/Cpl C A Richmond; £1,500 – CPO MT M C Anderson; £500 – ETWE S J Cooke.

July 10: £5,000 – ETME P A Bowen; £1,500 – Capt S W Garrett; £500 – Lt S D Banfield.

July 17: £5,000 – ETME T G Stanley; £1,500 – S/Lt C J Watters; £500 – WO1 P D Fudge.

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Winners of the World War 2 *Lost Films* DVD box set are:
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Reporting from the Fleet

Entries for the Deaths' column and Swap Drafts in September's Noticeboard must be received by August 11



Capital eyes on Richmond

THE time is morning rush hour on Monday July 5.

But we're sure the capital's commuters didn't mind being held up by one of Her Majesty's warships passing the unmistakeable raised bascules of Tower Bridge.

This is HMS Richmond – *pictured here by CPO(Phot) Andy Gedge* – entering the Pool of London for a rare hometown visit.

The frigate spent a week on the Thames, berthed next to HMS Belfast, with two aims: to show inhabitants of the capital what a Type 23 can do and to see the good folk of Richmond-upon-Thames.

Not since the ancient rights of Freedom of the Borough were bestowed on the ship five years ago have the men and women of HMS Richmond been back to their namesake town to parade.

After a formal inspection by the borough's mayor, Cllr David Marlow, the Band of HM Royal Marines led the Guard and three platoons through Richmond, while locals offered their encouragement.

"Having 96 officers and ratings march through our streets was an ideal way for residents – especially young people – to see at first hand what a front-line fighting unit looks like," said Cllr Marlow.

While in Richmond, sailors were invited into schools to give youngsters an insight into life at sea in today's RN; there was a particular grilling for four ship's company at Orleans Infants, where 200 four to six-year-olds were posing the questions.

"By far the highlight of the entire visit was the opportunity for the ship's company to exercise their Freedom of the Borough," said Capt Mike Walliker, Richmond's Commanding Officer.

"The parade was well received by the local populace who lined the route of the march."

Meanwhile, downstream...

The frigate had an extremely busy programme including an official reception, guided tours for military and affiliated organisations and numerous other briefings to invited guests – all with the aim of nurturing a better understanding of the Royal Navy among the general public and commercial leaders in the City of London.

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'Today is about saving Alliance'

WITH a flurry of poppy-like confetti swirling over the Silent Service's greatest museum-piece, a £6m appeal is launched to save HMS Alliance from the ravages of the elements.

After three decades as the key draw to the RN Submarine Musuem in Gosport, the boat – the last physical link with the iconic workhorses of World War 2 – is in trouble; time (and pigeons) have not been kind to her.

"As we all know, metal exposed to sea water and sea air doesn't last, and the time has come to restore the submarine," said Capt David Pender-Cudlip, Alliance's last commanding officer.

"I'm amazed how well the museum staff over the 30 years here have managed to maintain the submarine.

"This new project is really exciting. To have the ability to see the submarine from both sides and walk underneath, to really get some idea of the size and scale of the boat."

HMS ALLIANCE APPEAL

The Saving HMS Alliance Appeal, which enjoys royal patronage in the form of Prince William, was formally launched by deeps past and present in the shadow of the boat the campaign is intended to save.

Rear Admiral Roger Lane-Nott told the assembled audience: "Today is about saving HMS Alliance; her parlous state, as you look at her today, speaks for itself.

"Without our urgent action, it would be an unspeakable end to an historic boat, that is not only the icon of our World War 2 submarines, but an important part of the official memorial to the courageous submariners who lost their lives while serving their country."

The conservation work is expected to cost £6m, but the vast bulk of that has already been raised through the hard work of the appeal chairman Vice Admiral Sir Tim McClement and his team who have gathered almost £4.6m, including £3m from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The museum already has a reputation for excellence with its conservation work on early submarine Holland 1, and the new campaign will continue that tradition.

Alliance's restoration will require repair or replacement of her component parts, overhaul of her exterior, and the provision of means to keep up her maintenance needs.

Land underneath the submarine will be reclaimed, and with a cofferdam and backfill a dry hardstanding will be laid to allow access to the entire boat for exterior maintenance.

Alliance will be restored to a state as close as possible to when she first entered service, while allowing safe access for the visitors who throng to the site.

The boat has been on display to the public at the Gosport museum since 1982, and during that time some two million visitors have explored this glimpse inside the Silent Service.

For Rear Admiral Mark Anderson, Rear Admiral Submarines, Alliance is an essential link to his Service's history.

"The heritage that made submarines different was born in this generation."

The admiral spoke about bringing his young son to visit Alliance: "He loved it. It brought to life what daddy did for a living.

"And for the public, even looking through a periscope – which they've only ever seen in movies – here is the opportunity to get their hands on the real thing.

"The one thing that Alliance and the museum do is it's a good place for all generations – for children, they can explore and it's evocative; for the existing service as a home for our heritage; and it's a place that the veterans see as home, their *alma mater* here at Dolphin."

Alliance is the only remaining World War 2-era submarine in the UK that is open to the public, and is listed in the UK's historic ship register, alongside the Cutty Sark, the Mary Rose and HMS Victory in the core collection.

She serves as the official memorial to the 5,300 men who have fought and died in the Silent Service.

The RN Submarine Museum is keen to encourage people to start fundraising for the Alliance appeal, whether sponsored challenges or tea parties, public collections or raffles, or individual donations.

To support the campaign call 023 9251 0354 or visit www.submarine-museum.co.uk/alliance-appeal.

Picture: LA(Phot) Terry Boughton

Remembering the Lancastria

SAILORS from support ship RFA Fort Rosalie paid their respects to the greatest tragedy in British naval history – 70 years to the day that at least 3,500 people lost their lives.

The loss of the troopship Lancastria in June 1940 is regarded as a 'forgotten disaster', not least because Churchill ordered a cover-up initially.

The former liner was helping to evacuate British servicemen and civilians from the continent in the aftermath of Dunkirk.

She was sunk on the afternoon of June 17 1940 when Luftwaffe bombers attacked her off St Nazaire. At least 6,000 souls were aboard, perhaps as many as 7,000. Only 2,477 were officially rescued.

Seven decades later, the ship's company of RFA Fort Rosalie gathered in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery in La Baule-Escoublac, just outside St Nazaire.

The immaculately-maintained grounds are the last resting place of the largest number of dead from the Lancastria.

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary's Padre Rev Bernard Clarke led a service of remembrance which was attended by a small group of survivors and their families.

Commemorations followed the next day at the Lancastria memorial on St Nazaire's sea front with Capt Vernon Ramsey-Smith RFA laying a wreath on behalf of his service, and 2/O Ian Gill laying one on behalf of the Royal Navy.

They then sailed with veterans and families in a flotilla of craft, led by the French minehunter FS Pegase, to the buoy which marks the spot where the troopship sank for another service of remembrance.

Wreaths were cast into the ocean before every vessel bobbing around the wreck site sounded its horn as a mark of respect at the precise moment the Lancastria sank. A fly-past from an RAF 1 Squadron Harrier concluded events at sea.

Commemorations then moved back to St Nazaire and a *vin d'honneur* (reception) aboard Fort Rosalie.

Three survivors of the disaster – Stan Forrester, Fred Coe and Jacqueline Tanner – were the guests of honour, all with harrowing stories to tell of their escape from the stricken liner.

Mrs Tanner and her parents were thrown out of a lifeboat as it became stuck when the Lancastria sank.

Her father rescued her, swimming on his back, gripping the baby clothes of his daughter in his teeth until a sergeant jumped into the sea and helped the baby to safety, using a board to keep her above water.

As for Mr Coe, he was able – in typical British fashion – to see the lighter side, telling the RFA men and women it was ironic that his two brothers had joined the RN, but as an Army man, he was the only one who was sunk.

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Cattistock welcomes Lilliput team

MINEHUNTER HMS Cattistock spent the spring months conducting training along the South Coast.

She also tied up at Poole for three days to become the town's adopted ship – the village of Cattistock, after which the hunt is named, is close to Dorchester, north of Poole.

And when the warship sailed for home, she had one final piece of training to help with – and that involved the **Lilliput Sea Scouts**.

The 12 Sea Scouts from the ship's affiliated troop were invited to sail with Cattistock on the short hop across Boscombe Bay and through the Solent to Portsmouth.

The youngsters were given a tour of the ship and instructed in the finer points of man overboard drill, firefighting and the art of command – they were all given the opportunity to sit in the captain's chair.



● *MEMBERS of the Army Cadet Force and Air Training Corps joined Sea Cadets from across Staffordshire at a parade in Lichfield to mark the 150th anniversary of the cadet movement in the UK. Lt (SCC) Michelle Bradbury RNR, Warwickshire District Cadet Training Officer, CPO (SCC) Le-Ann Hale, First Lieutenant of TS Fort George – the Tamworth and Lichfield unit – and PO (SCC) David Eivers, First Lieutenant of TS Talent (Stoke-on-Trent unit) led the parade, while the standard bearer was POC Kerry Townsend, of TS Superb (Stafford unit). The salute was taken by Staffordshire Deputy Lieutenant Maj Gen Andrew Farquhar, while the senior Naval officer was Surg Cdre Alasdair Walker, Medical Director at Selly Oak Hospital*

Picture: Tom Eivers

Cossack band invitation

SOUTHWARK unit has been presented with the Mayor of Southwark's Award for "doing a tremendous job in encouraging young people to achieve their potential."

But the mayor had not finished with TS Cossack – he then extended a personal invitation to the unit band to play at the following week's Mayoral Ball in aid of Help for Heroes.

Bandmaster POC George Whitfield said: "It was both an honour and pleasure to support such a worthwhile event – just what the spirit of HMS Cossack and the Altmark Incident is all about, especially in this the 70th anniversary year."

Walk on the wall

A TEAM of six instructors from the North West Area – four from the Marines Cadets (Bravo Coy) and two from the Sea Cadets – have completed an 86-mile walk of Hadrian's Wall for Help for Heroes.

The team will have raised more than £3,500 once all monies have been collected.

The six were: Sgt Glenn MacLennan **(Altrincham and Sale)**, Sgt Phil Proctor **(Ellesmere Port)**, Sgt Andy Edgar **(Kendal)**, C/Sgt Dave Carter **(Salford)**, PO John Buckett **(Rochdale)** and WO2 Pete Bolton **(HQ)**.

Kettering change

THERE has been a change of command at the top of **Kettering** unit.

Lt (SCC) 'Smudge' Smith RMR has handed over the reins to S/Lt Marc Pether RNR.

Both men joined the unit in July 2006 after first meeting through the Corps there years earlier.

Smudge took command in October 2007 and Marc joined the Command team as First Lieutenant.

Kettering went on to win the Indefatigable Cup for most improved unit, and also went on to be a burgee unit.

Lt Smith said: "Out of everything I have ever done in the Sea Cadets, being CO of Kettering has been my proudest moment."

Civic honour for Whitehaven

THE Borough of Copeland has awarded the Freedom of the Borough to **Whitehaven**'s Sea Cadet unit at a ceremony during the town's Armed Forces Day celebrations.

The Freedom of the Borough is the highest honour that can be awarded by the Council, recognising exceptional service to the community.

The honour was also extended to members of the Army Cadet Force and Air Training Corps and to the regular Armed Forces.

The ceremony granting the Freedom of the Borough was staged on the harbourside, with the Mayor of Copeland, Cllr Mike McVeigh, presiding.

"We have always considered ourselves to be very much a part of the local community and we try to give our help and support whenever possible," said unit chairman Chas Tinkler.

"For the unit to be honoured in this way is just fantastic."

The CO of TS Bee, Lt (SCC) Peter Lucas RNR, added that it was not just today's cadets who were being honoured.

"I hope that former cadets and staff will also take pride in their unit being granted the Freedom of the Borough.

"This is not about what we did this year or last year, but about what we have consistently done over many years."

The Freedom of a Borough traditionally gives the "right, privilege, honour and distinction of marching through the streets of the Borough on ceremonial occasions with colours flying, bands playing and drums beating."



Salute to veterans

FIVE proud cadets sailed from Dover in HMS Monmouth to support the 70th Anniversary of Operation Dynamo, the evacuation of over 330,000 men from Dunkirk in 1940.

Cadets Alan Parks, Tom Rohan and Callum Roberts (**Canterbury**), along with Cadets Keiran Schwartz and Daniel Wallis (**Ashford**), embarked in the Black Duke but were far from passengers on the Channel crossing.

No sooner had they completed their safety briefs than it was straight into No4s and off to Parts of Ship for Harbour stations, and once clear of Dover harbour wall, it was time to turn in for the night ready for an early start.

The five later toured the frigate and helped prepare meals for the CO's lunch party and for the ship's company.

Onions chopped and pots washed, it was time to report for fire-fighting training before some well-earned shore leave.

The cadets participated in the international Remembrance Parade, in front of Prince Michael of Kent, with Callum and Daniel given the honour of laying a wreath *(pictured above)*.

Later that day they all visited the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships moored close by.

In their remaining time the cadets joined sailors in a tour of key Dynamo locations, helped host veterans on board, then coped with a wet and windy return to Blighty, during which they completed their tour of the ship by investigating the Merlin in the hangar.



● *Cadets from* **Cheshunt** *unit had the honour of providing a carpet guard for the Mayor of Broxbourne on the occasion of visits by mayors from Germany and Italy to the council offices. The cadets of TS Intrepid are pictured with the mayor, Cllr Mark Mills-Bishop*

Affiliation deal signed

TEIGN Valley unit has formally affiliated with two secondary schools at a ceremony at Ugbrooke House by invitation of Lord and Lady Clifford of Chudleigh.

The affiliation document promises the parties will "work in partnership by supporting and promoting each others aims, policies, educational training programs, and community projects for the general benefit of children and young people."

Teignmouth Community College will be referred to as Ajax and Teign School as Agamemnon, both hosting cadet training evenings.

A number of community projects will also be developed for the benefit of the local community, including a training ground and educational centre at Trusham.

Medal for Steven

PO (SCC) Steven Smedley, of **Huyton** unit, has been awarded the Cadet Forces Medal after 12 years of adult service within the Corps.

PO Smedley joined when his son wanted to become a cadet at the age of 12, and he has since become an integral part of the unit and district staff – as well as building a reputation for making top-notch eggy bread.



Next generation joins in

THREE generations of the same family featured amongst the ranks of **Brighton** unit on parade during the National Pilgrimage of the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham – the 30th year TS Brighton has participated.

CPO (SCC) Michael O'Keefe attended the first parade in 1980 – a one-day event, though the unit now holds a four-day camp over the weekend while members help with the running of the event, parade and stage displays.

Since that time he has seen other members of his family join in.

Pictured *(above)* with CPO O'Keefe *(second left)* are his wife PO (SCC) Cathy O'Keefe *(right)*, his son PO (SCC) Karl O'Keefe *(left)* and his granddaughter Junior Cadet Elisha O'Keefe *(centre)*. Also pictured is the Rev Canon Beaumont Brandie, who is Brighton unit chairman and chaplain and event organiser.

The pilgrimage to the tiny Norfolk village attracts up to 10,000 people.

Brilliant show in campaign

TUNBRIDGE WELLS unit were presented with a Certificate of Commendation for Most Outstanding Contribution to the Community by the local borough council at an award ceremony celebrating their 'Love Where We Live' campaign.

Winners are nominated by members of the community and selected by a judging panel consisting of council officials, the district police commander and the editor of KOS Media.

PO (SCC) Price received the certificate on behalf of TS Brilliant from judging panellist Chief Inspector Martin Wilson.

Hard work is acknowledged

CADETS from **Rhyl** unit have been acknowledged by Denbighshire County Council for their hard work and dedication by awarding them young volunteer certificates.

Cadets aged between 12 and 16 received certificates up to platinum level, having accrued over 200 hours of volunteering, while over-16s received certificates from the Welsh Assembly.

The Deputy Mayor of Rhyl, the Mayor of Prestatyn, the chairman of Denbigh council and the local assembly member all praised the work and dedication shown by the cadets, adding that when young people are not always seen in a good light, it was uplifting to see so many youngsters prepared to work for the good of the community.

Air show boost

ALMOST 50 cadets and 20 staff from all **Chestaffs** District units attended Cosford Air Show to raise the profile of the Corps and boost recruitment during the Cadet 150 initiative.

Marine displays including a bivvy area, camouflage and concealment and tasting ration packs, while bluejacket cadets demonstrated knot-tying – popular with members of the public – a rigging exercise and several leadership tasks and games.



● *POC Katy Watt of* **Dalbeattie** *unit is presented with her award for being Best Cadet in Scotland in 2009 by the Assistant CHief of Defence Staff (Reserves & Cadets). The award entitles Katy to a week's training in TS Royalist, John Jerwood or Jack Petchey, sponsored by E G Thomson (Holdings) Ltd*

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● *The Red Arrows soar above the cadets' parade on the Mall*
Picture: Sgt Andy Malthouse (RAF)

Youngsters star in London pageantry

IT IS all a matter of your point of view.

For the bands and marchers – cadets and staff – who attended the Cadet 150 Royal Review, seeing the famous landmarks of London and being at the heart of a piece of pageantry was truly memorable.

AC Amanda Santry's point of view was pretty restricted – but the 15-year-old **Torfaen** cadet would not have swapped it for the world as she led the whole parade along the Mall, her eyes fixed ahead on Buckingham Palace.

On the other hand, the point of view for Paul Huggett and Izzy Fletcher was stunning, though their participation lasted just a few seconds as they roared across the capital in the Hawks of the Red Arrows.

Let's start with the London dimension.

To many it is a familiar city, but there were some who gathered on a sultry Tuesday morning in early July who had never been before.

To visit in such style is typical of the opportunities afforded by the Sea Cadet Corps and its sister organisations, the Army Cadet Force, the Air Training Corps and the Combined Cadet Force.

Youngsters from 76 Corps units and districts were represented *(see opposite page)*, gathering on the grass verges of Horse Guards Road to make final preparations for the parade.

The instruments for the Corps band were laid out in neat rows, the 70-plus musicians and many more marchers stretching their legs and making last-minute adjustments to their uniforms.

Clouds rolled in to provide respite from the sun's rays, though it remained muggy as the participants began to take their places on the dusty parade ground, watched by their own drill instructors and a couple of ever-alert Guards warrant officers in red tunics and bearskins.

The members of the five bands – SCC, CCF, AFC, ATC and a combined AFC/ATC pipe band – tuned up as laggards were chivvied into place and items retrieved from coaches (or not in at least one case – "anyone got a spare hair-net?")

Blocks of colour solidified – the dark blue of the Sea Cadets, the lighter blue of the air cadets, the rainbow of uniforms of the Army band.

As the moment to step off approached, the most important cadet on the parade ground was checking around her and preparing to get the show on the road.

As Drum Major for the Sea Cadet band, Amanda Santry had the prime position but a lousy view – at no point could she cast a backward glance at more than 1,500 co-marchers to ensure things were going according to plan.

She just had to trust the rest of the team – including three colleagues from TS Kittiwake on bass drum, cymbals and drum/bugle – and hope that the days of training would pay dividends on this most public of stages.



● *Sea Cadets prepare for the parade along the Mall*
Picture: PO(Phot) Amanda Reynolds

"I am really excited and nervous as well," said Amanda as the clock ticked down.

"I am really looking forward to this.

"We have been practising in Portsmouth over the weekend and had another day's training and a final practice – it's a really good band, and we have had Royal Marines training us as well."

Then at 1.45pm, with the Torfaen unit mace gripped firmly in her white gauntlets, Amanda set the parade in motion, wheeling right on to Horse Guards Road then left on to the Mall, which was lined with thousands of spectators, well-wishers and families – including Amanda's parents and brother.

Of course, the band, taking their rightful place at the head of the parade by dint of their status as the Senior Service, led by example.

At Clarence House the Prince of Wales, in his Naval uniform, took the salute alongside Vice Admiral Sir Tom Blackburn, chairman of the Marine Society and Sea Cadets, Cdre Robert Mansergh, head of Reserve Forces and Cadets, and Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans Andrew Robathan.

Eyes turned briefly to the skies (parade members aside, of course) as the Red Arrows, each carrying a cadet in the rear seat, blasted their way west across London before returning to their base at RAF Scampton in Lincolnshire.

And although there was the odd drawback, mainly associated with the need for sickbags, it was an experience any cadet would give their eye teeth for.

"Flying with the Red Arrows was a fantastic experience," said POC Paul Huggett, the Southern Area Navy Board cadet and a member of **Hastings** unit.

"Despite being sick, it has confirmed my ambition to be a fast jet pilot, though not for the RAF but for the RN.

"From the ground you can see the Reds fly close together when in formation, but when you're up there with them it looks, and is, extremely close.

"I flew in Red 5 and on landing back at RAF Scampton we did a manoeuvre called a run and break. In this we pulled 5G..."

POC Izzy Fletcher, the other airborne Sea Cadet representative, is a member of **Yeovil** unit.

Back on the ground, following the Sea Cadets contingent was the CCF band, led by Drum Major Fred Collins, who has just finished at Adams' Grammar School sixth form in Shropshire.

Almost 60 pupils drawn from schools across the UK have spent the past year and more training under Cdr David Oldbury, with



● *POC Paul Huggett with Flt Lt Zane Sennett, the pilot of Red 5*
Picture: SAC Rob Travis (RAF)



● *POC Izzy Fletcher of the Sea Cadets being measured up for her flying helmet at RAF Scampton before taking to the skies with the Red Arrows*
Picture: SAC Rob Travis (RAF)



● *Prince Charles takes the salute as the Sea Cadet band marches past Clarence House on the Mall*
Picture: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill



● *The Red Arrows – carrying nine cadets in the back seats, two representing the Sea Cadet Corps – en route to London for the Cadet 150 fly-past* Picture: SAC Rob Travis (RAF)

the finishing touches to the programme being applied at HMS Raleigh during the Easter holidays and at Whale Island in the week before the review.

With Royal Marines bandsmen having had their input, and ceremonial veteran WO1 John Snoddon adding "the icing on the cake", the band – with a sizeable RN presence – put in as good a performance as the musicians up in front of them.

Just behind them were the 80 or so CCF RN cadets, under the watchful eye of Cdr (CCF) Bob Mitchell RNR, who heads the King's College School Wimbledon contingent.

"We have only been together for two days, and I am amazed at what hard work can achieve in that time," he said.

"They started off a little bit rough but by yesterday they were very good, and whereas they were nervous before, today they were excited and looking forward to doing their bit.

"A lot of parents were here, somewhere along the route, and they are very keen for mum and dad to see them."

The parade finished by turning left into Spur Road and across Birdcage Walk into Wellington Barracks, the youngsters and the marching adult staff being warmly applauded every inch of the way.

As instruments were put back into cases and loaded on the van, the Sea Cadets' Drum Major could enjoy the rest of the afternoon.

"That was amazing," said Amanda, who was selected for the position because of her performances at training camps over the past few months.

"Everything went according to plan, thank goodness.

"It was great fun, though it was a bit of a blur – I was too busy concentrating to see anyone along the way."

That view was confirmed by SCC HQ staff officer Lt Cdr (SCC) Derek Payne RNR, the Director of Music.

"That was fantastic," he said.

"We have got cadets in the band representing 19 units from across the country, and I am absolutely delighted with their performance today.

"They really showed what Sea Cadet music is all about – nothing went wrong, it was faultless."

He also had praise for Amanda on her major event debut, and pointed out that others in the band were also performing at a high level – such as Acting POC Chris Palucsis, on cornet, who was also preparing for his audition with the Royal Marines Band Service.

Tunbridge Wells unit claimed a double success on the big day – not only can they count Lt Cdr Payne as one of their own (he joined the unit as a cadet in 1960) but also parade commander Lt Cdr (SCC) John Vanns RNR (who joined in 1977) was also a TS Brilliant alumni.

The last section in from the parade – Scottish Army cadet and Romney Marsh air cadet pipers – had barely drained their bottles of water before the cadets and staff moved off again, this time on the short march back across to Buckingham Palace and a special royal garden party.

The CCF band, which spent the days before the parade training at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth, enjoyed the occasion so much they marched back down the Mall to drop off their instruments before retracing their steps to the palace.

Four detachments of 100 cadets from each organisation formed a ceremonial guard for members of the royal family – including Prince Charles, the Duchess of Cornwall, the Earl of Wessex, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester and the Duke of Kent – who met as many of the 6,000 cadets, families and support staff as they could over the next two hours.

Relaxing inside the gardens of the palace, cadets from all the forces chatted with each other and tackled plates of sandwiches and cakes.

George Worden, Charles Donnelly and Jay Cadman, of the **Bournemouth School CCF**, all marched along the Mall having undertaken final practices at Uxbridge.

"When we marched at Uxbridge we did it very well, so we were quite confident," said Jay.

"And the senior officers helped ease the tension by telling us what to expect," said Charles, who added that one general fear was that the hot weather would take its toll – as it happened, the final practice was more of an ordeal than the big day itself.

OC Elizabeth Hodges, 14, of **Sutton Coldfield** unit, played piccolo in the Sea Cadet band, and though she has played at the national Trafalgar Day parade more than once, the Cadet 150 event topped the lot.

"I have always wondered what it was like through the palace gates," said Elizabeth, who had five unit colleagues with her in the band. And now she knows.

Speaking from the gardens of the palace, Capt Mark Windsor, Captain Sea Cadets, said: "It has been a brilliant event today.

"I really enjoyed the parade, and I think all the cadets from all the Services did themselves proud today."



● *(Above) Last-minute checks for Drum Major Amanda Santry before the parade along the Mall gets under way (below)*

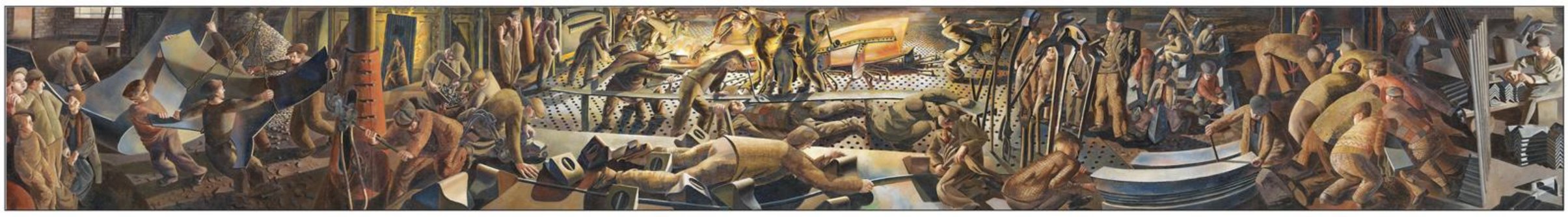
Units on parade

SEA Cadet units and districts which were represented at the Cadet 150 Royal Review included:
Altrincham and Sale, Ashford, Bangor (Gwynedd), Belfast, Bolton, Bristol, Cambridge, Chester, Chiltern (Bucks), Chippenham, Crewe, Dalbeattie, Dartmouth, Dundonald, East Kilbride, Essex District, Filey, Fishguard, Gravesend, Greenock, Harrogate, Hartlepool, Hastings, Herne Bay, Hertford and Ware, Hornchurch and Upminster, Horsham, Hull, Ipswich, Leith (Edinburgh), London, Maidstone, Methil, Milford Haven, Morecambe and Heysham, Musselburgh, Neath, Newburn (Newcastle-upon-Tyne), Northampton and Wellingborough, North East Yorkshire District, Nottingham, Pembroke Dock, Plymouth, Poole, Portland, Portrush, Queensferry (Edinburgh), Ramsgate and Broadstairs, Redditch and Bromsgrove, Rhyl, Runcorn, Scarborough, Sefton, Isle of Sheppey, Shirley (West Midlands), South Shields, Southampton, Stafford and Rugeley, Stevenage, Stonehaven, Sutton Coldfield, Swansea, Thornbury, Tooting and Balham, Torfaen, Tunbridge Wells, Wallasey, Waltham Forest, Walton-on-the-Naze, Warsash, Weymouth, Whitstable, Wirral District, Workington, Worthing, York.



● *Cadets representing all three Services met up on Horse Guards Parade before the step-off* Picture: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill





Phoenix from the ashes

A NEW state-of-the-art museum facility has opened in Chatham – a phoenix from the ashes of the old dockyard foundry.

No 1 Smithery represents a bold design and a bold partnership with the National Maritime Museum (NMM) and the Imperial War Museum (IWM).

The building itself, which stands on Museum Square in the Historic Dockyard, was once the yard's ironworks, dating from 1808.

Churning out items from anchors to the 'knees' used to strengthen joints on warships, the Smithery was a hot, noisy, smoky building, and working the furnaces and hammers was gruelling and unpleasant.

The Smithery expanded during the 19th and 20th centuries, but

No1 SMITHERY

NATIONAL TREASURES INSPIRING CULTURE

in recent years had become a decaying relic of the industrial age, and a new role for the Scheduled Ancient Monument was sought.

At the same time, a new home was being sought for the NMM's reserve collections – a treasure-trove of artefacts, including large-scale models – which lay in storage.

As part of the £13 million rejuvenation of the Smithery, architects van Heyningen and Haward have designed a series of innovative 'boxes' within the old walls, which have been stabilised to arrest further deterioration.

These boxes form a series of display galleries, exhibition spaces and high-tech storage vaults for the national collection.

No 1 Smithery was officially launched at the end of last month, and the first exhibition embodies the principles behind the building.

Resonance and Renewal – Shipbuilding on the Clyde is an evocative display of paintings by Sir Stanley Spencer, on loan from the IWM.

Running until December 12, the exhibition is a rare chance to see the eight newly-restored paintings together, as they were meant to be viewed.

The paintings, commissioned by the War Artists' Advisory Committee, represent life at the Lithgow Shipyard in Port Glasgow during World War 2.

Along with more than 20 associated drawings, the paintings depict the hard and heavy labour involved in producing ships – in conditions which would have been familiar to the former workers of No 1 Smithery, hence the 'resonance' element of the title.

No 1 Smithery has five main areas:



● *Shipyard men work on keel plates (top) and pipes (detail above) in Sir Stanley Spencer's paintings*

Pictures by permission of the Imperial War Museum

- National Maritime Museum treasures, galleries displaying the pick of the NMM, IWM and Chatham Historic Dockyard collections;
- The Gallery, an exhibition space for touring exhibitions;
- The Courtyard, a large area for family activities;
- The Pipebending Floor, used to show visitors something of the building's original purpose;
- The Repository, storage space for more than 4,000 models and artefacts.

Navy News will be looking at the Historic Dockyard in more detail in the coming months.

Bare head

A SENIOR rate is to direct a musical making its first appearance in Hampshire.

CPO Neil Mogridge, staff administration officer at HMS Nelson in Portsmouth, is bringing *Bare, the Musical* to St Peter's Theatre in Fraser Road, Southsea, from August 19-21.

Based loosely on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, *Bare* is set in a Catholic boarding school, and deals with pertinent social issues that youngsters face today, according to Neil.

Bare has never been performed in Hampshire, as far as Neil knows, but has been a popular show in the US, Canada and Australia since it opened in Hollywood in 2000.

The Portsmouth version will be performed by the Giselle Academy of Theatre Arts, of which Neil is musical director.

All aboard for new exhibition

IMPERIAL War Museum North has launched a new exhibition exploring life at sea in wartime.

All Aboard: Stories of War at Sea runs until April 25 2011, and promises action-packed and interactive exhibition for all the family.

Learn a little Jackspeak, try out Naval clothing, learn about Naval animal mascots and discover real-life stories of bravery, suffering and survival.

The free exhibition covers conflicts from World War 1 to the present day, with even more events planned for 'Ship-Shape Saturdays' throughout the run.

Imperial War Museum North is at The Quays, Trafford Park.

Cambria divisions take pride of place

IT WAS all happening in Cardiff this summer.

The capital of Wales played host not only to the national Armed Forces Day event *(see page 13)* but also to a RNR ceremonial event as part of the Scott 100 celebrations *(see page 11)*.

HMS Cambria, the Reserve unit based in Sully, held summer divisions outside the National Assembly building, with First Minister of Wales Carwyn Jones, Cdre Chris Steel (Commander Maritime Reserve) and Cdre Jamie Miller (Naval Regional Commander for Wales and Western England) carrying out the inspection.

As well as Cambria's personnel, who provided the guard and marching platoons, the divisions were supported by Royal Marine Reserves from Bristol, the Wales University Royal Navy Unit, Cardiff Sea Cadets, members of the Scott and Cambria Association and the band of the Royal Marines from RM Lympstone.

The event was also an opportunity for two members of HMS Cambria's ship's company to receive Iraq medals following their deployment to the Gulf last year – ABs Natalie Morgan and Kyle Frederick served in Force Protection Teams in the Northern Arabian Gulf, as well as various other training and support roles.

This was the first time that Cambria had paraded outside the National Assembly and unit CO Cdr Simon Cottam said: "Everyone performed admirably and made this a special occasion to remember."

Expert view

ANTIQUES Roadshow expert John Bly brought his experience to bear on the Mary Rose's collection of 19,000 artefacts in Portsmouth, most of which cannot be displayed through lack of room.

John said: "The Mary Rose Museum is the closest thing to time travel I've ever experienced.

"Tudor life surrounds you and welcomes you in.

"The display of these unique historical artefacts is so thoughtfully organised as to be captivating, informative and enjoyable for every age group, whether novice or knowledgeable."



● *A DECOMMISSIONED Sea Harrier hangs in the Tate Britain Duveen Galleries, part of Fiona Banner's* **Harrier and Jaguar** *exhibition, which runs until January 3. According to Tate Britain, "for Banner these objects represent the 'opposite of language', used when communication fails. In bringing body and machine into close proximity she explores the tension between the intellectual perception of the fighter plane and physical experience of the object." The ex-RAF Jaguar, the other part of the exhibition, lies on its back, paintwork stripped back to highly-polished silver metal*



● *A Sea King from 846 NAS lands at Blanchlands College, Guernsey*

Junglie squadron visits Guernsey

A GROUP of aircrew and engineers from 846 Naval Air Squadron, Commando Helicopter Force, enjoyed a warm welcome in the Channel Islands on the 65th anniversary of their liberation from the Germans during World War 2.

The Junglies took time out from a hectic training schedule to visit the tranquil surroundings of Guernsey before they deploy to the somewhat more hostile terrain of Afghanistan later this year.

The squadron also strengthened their links with the Channel Islanders when they dropped into Blanchlands College in Guernsey.

Pilot Lt Mike Brown said: "We were overwhelmed by the enthusiastic reaction to our visit.

"The locals have made our brief visit memorable and welcoming and it's an honour to be here in Guernsey celebrating the island's 65th Liberation Weekend."

Clyde road check

MEMBERS of the MOD Police (MDP) at Clyde Naval Base teamed up with Strathclyde Police's traffic department and the Vehicle Operator Services Agency (VOSA) for a joint safety initiative.

Running for 3½ hours one Thursday morning at the base's busy North Gate, the officers pulled over HGVs, vans and trailers entering the site and gave them a thorough safety check.

Inspectors from VOSA looked at brakes, steering and the vehicle tachographs amongst other things, while MDP Officers went over the vehicles with search dogs.

Strathclyde Police also brought along their automatic number plate recognition camera, checking that tax, MOT and insurance was up-to-date, although they scored no 'hits' on the day.

Three vehicles received a 'delayed prohibition', ordering them to take their vehicles to the garage, while five received an 'immediate prohibition' which saw them being taken off the road immediately due to safety concerns.

Aussie rule is broken

THE Prince of Wales has visited HMS Seahawk to meet personnel and their families, as well as presenting medals and awards.

Capt Toby Williamson, the Commanding Officer at RN Air Station Culdrose, greeted Prince Charles, who was accompanied by the Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall, Lady Mary Holborow.

A break with tradition was made when the prince presented the Australia Shield to Cdr Pat Douglas, Commander of the Sea King Force of the Royal Navy.

The shield is awarded annually by the Commander-in-Chief to the front-line squadron achieving the highest degree of operational capability.

But this year the award was made to the Sea King Airborne Surveillance and Control Force as a whole in special recognition of the efforts made to get this much-needed capability to operations in Afghanistan.

The two front-line squadrons, 854 and 857, augmented by members of the HQ, continue to be engaged in an enduring roulement in support of coalition troops.

Campaign medals were also presented to 14 members of the two squadrons.

Cruise after crossing

BARELY had they returned from Dunkirk than the Little Ships were being prepared for their annual Veterans Cruise.

The cruise on the Thames will take place on Sunday September 5, with the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships (ADLS) flotilla mooring downriver of Kingston Bridge for veterans to embark at 0930 for a 1000 departure.

Arrival at Weybridge Mariners Club (where veterans will be hosted for lunch) will be around 1300 before veterans will return to Kingston in a fleet of period vehicles at around 1530.

The event is open to all Dunkirk and D-Day veterans, who should contact organiser Ian Gilbert on 07515 026970 to reserve a place on one of the ships.

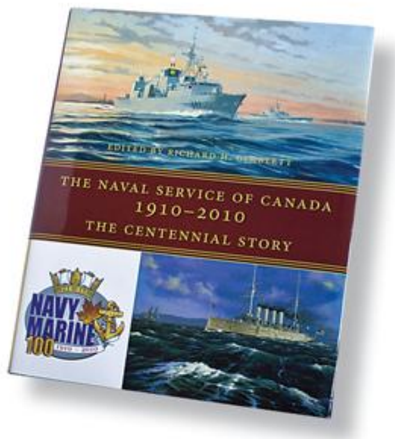
More than 20 ships are expected to take part, assisted by young ratings from HMS Collingwood and local Sea Cadets, who help with berthing and slipping at the locks at East Molesey and Sunbury.

The event usually draws large crowds of spectators and supporters along the banks of the Thames.

New memorial

A MEMORIAL has been dedicated in Staffordshire to mark the dedication of Spiritualists who have served in the UK's Armed Forces.

The granite obelisk was unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, paid for by the Spiritualists' National Union's 360 churches as well as individual members.



Maple seamen

IN KEEPING with the Canadian Navy's centennial featured earlier in this edition, there's an official history charting the service's first 100 years.

The Naval Service of Canada 1910-2010: The Centennial Story (*Natural Heritage Books*, £24 ISBN 978-1554884704) is an excellent and beautifully-produced overview of the former dominion's fleet from its difficult birth to its current global role.

A dozen experts and historians were asked to write chapters detailing the various eras and phases in the Navy's life.

For the first four decades of its 100-year existence, the Royal Canadian Navy was inextricably bound with the Fleet which gave birth to it – courtesy of two titanic clashes with the German Navy.

Canada's premier at the time of his navy's birth was one Sir Wilfrid Laurier whose words are as prescient now as they were in 1910: "Whoever may take over the reins of power will have to have a navy, as every nation with a seashore must have."

The fledgling RCN was woefully unprepared for the first war in 1914 (the Admiralty haughtily dismissed offers of assistance and suggested the Dominion focus on building up her Army).

Charged principally with protecting Canadian shores and helping to marshall convoys to Europe, the RCN did not especially cover itself in glory. The press lambasted the Navy for failing to safeguard the fishing fleet while the public (unfairly) blamed it for a terrible explosion – the largest man-made blast in the pre-nuclear age – on a munitions ship which flattened Halifax.

How things were different a generation later. At every step of Britain's struggle against Germany and, later, Japan, the Royal Canadian Navy was there.

Indeed, the RCN mushroomed thirtyfold in WW2, principally to deal with the U-boat menace.

That struggle was, says the author of that chapter, "the formative experience of the Royal Canadian Navy". It is a war of reservists in largely Canadian-built warships to defend North Atlantic trade.

It was an unglamorous job and one with few 'kills' (only 33 of the 1,000 or so U-boats sunk by the Allies were destroyed by Canadian warships), but it paved the way for the RCN's post-war role with NATO.

Half-way through the Cold War, the RCN ceased to exist.

As part of a reorganisation of the nation's forces; the White Ensign was laid up and the Royal Canadian Navy became Maritime Command, the naval element of the new tri-Service Canadian Forces; the merger of the country's three Forces was intended to save money by cutting back on bureaucracy.

Four decades later, the 'joint' question dominates British military thinking – and has prompted a few internecine squabbles.

So perhaps it's worth taking a leaf out of Canada's book.

There was much huffing and puffing in the upper echelons of the Navy about morale, eradication of tradition, ethos and the like...

...Yet the official historian Richard Mayne says the ordinary rank and file didn't especially care.

They were more interested in pay, better conditions ashore, and the ratio of ship-to-shore time.

Thus were it ever so...

Mounting a defence

'DICKIE' Mountbatten will always remain the most controversial Naval officer of his generation.

Respected and admired by some, mistrusted and even hated by others, he has always been difficult to assess in a balanced way, *writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.*

Philip Zeigler, his authorised biographer, had constantly to remind himself that his subject, "despite everything really was a great man."

The latest contribution to this historiography is **Mountbatten: The Apprentice Warlord** (*IB Tauris*, £25 ISBN 978-1 84885-374-4). Its author is Adrian Smith of Southampton University who has been using his position working beside the Mountbatten archives on campus to write what is, in effect, an academic commentary on Mountbatten's career up to his departure in 1943 to take up the South East Asian Supreme Command.

The book is in four broadly chronological but overlapping parts: 'Mountbatten, Consul, Courtier, Charmer and Chancer'; 'Mountbatten at War 1914-39'; Mountbatten's period as Captain(D) of the Fifth Destroyer Flotilla 1939-41; and, finally his period as Chief of Combined Operations, 1941-43.

The author puts forward a generally positive spin on a subject who understood the potential of spin doctoring long before the term was invented.

He paints a picture of a vulnerable man hiding behind a traditional privileged – indeed royal – exterior, but very conscious of the dynamics of modern communications and social change in altering the way he could project a positive image consonant with these powerful forces.

His driven nature led to disasters of naval leadership that no-one without his social advantages could have overcome. His relationship with Churchill obtained for him higher command posts to which his talents of intrigue and double dealing were more suited.

The great blot on Mountbatten's first period of higher defence management was the disastrous Dieppe Raid.

The greatest strength of this

The Grove Review

volume is its up-to-date assessment of Mountbatten's disputed role. Despite a well-judged critique of Brian Loring Villa's methodology, in the end Smith seems to support the critical line of the Canadian historian that the raid was not authorised by the Chiefs of Staff.

Smith puts forward a powerful argument (contrary to Zeigler's considered view) that Churchill did indeed alter the account in his own history of the war to correspond with Mountbatten's oft-repeated mantra that the raid was an inevitable sacrifice on the learning curve that led to the Normandy landings.

The synthesis is provided by the work of David Reynolds who is quoted as asserting "if Mountbatten had been given authority to act alone, that makes him largely responsible for the shambles – hence the desperate attempts... to shift the blame."

At times the book reads a little like a PhD student's literature review with the author letting his sources – as just quoted – make the salient points, rather than he himself. Certainly the book has a discursive and loose feel to it which detracts from its overall impact. In places, it is hard to deduce whose side the author is on, Mountbatten's or the critics'. Balance is fine but confusion is not.

Its most serious problem, however is its inadequate and ill-informed analytical approach to the naval history of the period.

Important sources are missing from the copious footnotes. The author does not understand the true reasons for the vulnerability of World War I battle-cruisers in which Mountbatten began his career; it was poor ammunition handling not design faults that led to fatal explosions.

The discussion of the naval air question – important given Mountbatten's role in the transfer of the FAA to Admiralty control – is also weak. The 1917 Admiralty would have been surprised to learn of its 'readiness' to give up its aircraft to the new third Service; the problem was more one of the



● *A sailor with promise... A Cadet Battenberg – as he was then – pictured at BRNC, circa 1914*

Admiralty trying to hold on to everything and ending up with nothing.

The author is very wide of the mark to argue that if Churchill had still been First Lord in 1917 the situation would have been different; the future prime minister was always a strong supporter of an independent air service. His help in eventually getting the FAA passed to the Navy was a result of Admiralty intrigue in which the under-estimated Chatfield used Mountbatten as a useful go-between.

The section on Mountbatten's period in command of the Fifth Destroyer Flotilla is again rather spoiled by inadequate knowledge of the technical background.

The Mountbatten archives and the other sources used give the author a rather slanted impression of the personal influence of Mountbatten and others in ship design and fitting.

The author is generally balanced in his coverage of major incidents that marked this eventful time, when Mountbatten was lucky not to lose his leading destroyer earlier, be it the famous Kelly or her substitute HMS Javelin that had two German torpedo hits which blew off its bow and stern. Smith puts Mountbatten's 'teflon coating' to Churchill's need for unblemished heroes to maintain national morale.

Happily his predecessors (who Smith treats in a rather old-fashioned, critical way) had provided the prime minister with enough well built destroyers for there to be sufficient margin for such dangerous adventures to be tolerated.

At times mistakes are serious and confusing.

The author thinks the debate at the Admiralty at the start of the ill-fated Norwegian campaign, when the First Sea Lord returned tired from a visit to the Mountbattens, was about calling off the mining of Norwegian coastal waters.

It was not; it was about whether a British occupation force designed precisely to respond to any German aggression caused by the mining be ordered to disembark. The decision of the 'well dined' First Lord to act on the mistaken assumption that it was a major German Atlantic breakout and the troops be put ashore was the beginning of a long chapter of accidents.

The above defects do not prevent the book being useful and interesting. One insight is the Anglo-American relations dimension of putting Mountbatten in command of HMS Illustrious when the ship (not however the RN's latest carrier at the time as Smith asserts) was being repaired in the USA.

On balance the book does shed much interesting light on Mountbatten and is a worthwhile – if sometimes frustrating – read. Its contrasting strengths and weaknesses remind one of its subject.

War has a funny side

IT'S not often we laugh out loud at the *Navy News* offices.

War. Death. Destruction. It tends to get you down.

So enter Ian 'George' Ditch's **Laughing Kitbags** (*Authorhouse*, £10.99 ISBN 978-1-4490-7107-3/www.ianditch.co.uk), a ribald collection of dits from two dozen years' service as a helicopter engineer with the Fleet Air Arm.

It's laugh-out-loud funny.

The language is a bit choice (the author calls it "no nonsense") and the spelling/grammar is a little suspect, but if you've served in the RN in the past 30 or 40 years, you'll recognise the characters – and escapades – which fill Ian's memoirs (the title comes from Jackspeak: laughing till you can laugh no more).

A run ashore in Hamburg (to places HMS Bulwark's command team naturally urged matelots to stay well clear of), the odd scrap, gash Popeye tats, Royal Marines demolishing snowmen in Norway. Memories to last a lifetime and all typical RN fare...

Now no collection of humourous nautical tales would be complete without a dig at the Crabs...

... so when the Commando Helicopter Force was in Bosnia in the 90s, the lads fancied a curry night.

A mate offered to bring take-aways to camp from home. Not the easiest thing to smuggle into the middle of a war-torn country.

Enter a 4x3 'Thomas bin' packed with India's very finest cuisine, some gaffer tape, and the words: 'Giro, handle like eggs' and 'Aircraft components, very fragile' down the side.

The Crabs duly delivered said 'parts' from Yeovilton to Bosnia, the lads had a tremendous curry night and took a photo to prove it... which featured in the local paper.

A few days later Ian's CO was answering questions about taxpayers' money being used to fly curry from Somerset to the Balkans courtesy of Crab Air.

Happy days.

The final testimony

WE NOTED with sadness that the passing of Henry Allingham last year meant our ties with the Great War generation – and the Grand Fleet – had finally been cut.

Not so, for there's the forgotten British sailor, Claude Choules, still with us at the age of 109, albeit half a world away from his native land.

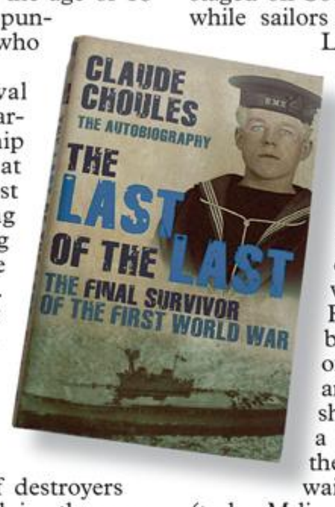
He is the last man to see action in both World Wars – and one of only three people on the planet alive today (mid-July) who served in the 1914-1918 conflagration.

The former senior rating is suffering from failing health, but two decades ago, when he was a mere octogenarian, he recorded his life packed with experiences for his family in a number of old school notebooks.

Twenty years later, those notes were transcribed and form the basis of **The Last of the Last: The Final Survivor of the First World War** (*Mainstream*, £16.99 ISBN 978-1-84596-6317).

Choules joined the Royal Navy at the age of 14 – the Army rejected him because of his youth, but not the RN (courtesy of some string-pulling by his father).

His account of training at HMS Mercury is an excellent window into the life of a boy seaman in the early 20th Century – a world of strict discipline, drill, schooling, training, cleaning, church, sport. Serious dissent meant a caning, in front of the entire ship's company. There wasn't a great deal of fun; in spare hours, the boys would go on 'walks' (really marches), play music or learn to dance. Smoking was forbidden until they became ordinary seamen at the age of 18 (caning again the punishment for boys who erred).



Choules' naval career began in earnest with battleship HMS Revenge at Scapa Flow – most sailors, the young Choules among them, found the place monotonous. Yet occasionally the Grand Fleet offered grand sights.

"Imagine a line of battleships stretching for miles, steaming at 20kts, with lines of destroyers out on either beam doing the same speed," he recalls. "A signal flying from the flagship is hauled down, the destroyers out on the starboard beam at a distance of half a mile turn slighty towards the line of battleships and increase speed as they approach, finally passing between them with the distance between the battleships only two cable lengths apart."

Otherwise, life at Scapa was dull – except on Mondays when ships would practise what might be called a forerunner of today's Thursday Wars: battle drill "at full speed and full pressure" such as fire-fighting and sending rescue details to other ships.

It's forgotten now, but the end of WW1 was a cause of tremendous celebration. A Fleet Review was staged off Southend in July 1919, while sailors were dispatched to London to take part in a huge victory parade.

After that Revenge was dispatched to the Mediterranean and Black Sea where there was little sign of peace: Turkey was in turmoil and Russia was rocked by revolution. Malta offered some respite... and Choules and his shipmates 'borrowed' a train to return to their ship rather than wait in Città Vecchia (today Mdina).

When the call came for volunteers to serve as instructors in Australia in the mid-20s, the now PO Choules put his name forward.

He was never to return to the RN; on the voyage out he met his future wife and, after a year at Flinders Naval Depot, Melbourne, he was asked to transfer to the Royal Australian Navy.

By WW2 he was a seasoned torpedoman and expert in demolition; he was tasked with dealing with washed-up mines and depth charges, and preparing Fremantle's harbour for demolition should the Japanese invade Australia. They didn't.

His knowledge of explosives came in handy at home, too.

His daughter was terrified of a frog whose morning croaks woke her. Claude decided to dispatch of the pesky amphibian with a bit of gelignite under the frog's favourite shrubs. He lit the fuse, retreated and... bang. "I was sure that I had fixed it, but almost immediately the old frog started croaking again," he writes.

The Australian element makes these memoirs slightly different – and it's interesting to contrast the reactions to the war's end in Fremantle and Perth with those in Britain a generation earlier. They were almost identical.

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SPORT

Exceedingly good golf from Alex

Continued from page 48

the start of the back nine and with Kippen playing steady golf, the newcomer completed a memorable championship debut triumphing finally by two shots.

The ladies event was played over two rounds on the final two days of the championships. Strong favourite for the title was POPT Wendy Briggs (HMS Drake) and she duly showed the way in the first round with an impressive 77.

LA(Phot) Claire Jones (also Drake) was second – and this was the way things ended after the final round with Briggs recording an 82 to regain the trophy. PO Nicky Wade (RM Poole) took the net handicap prize.

The men's Inter Command team events were a repetition of the 2009 contest and another outstanding success for Portsmouth led by WO1 Bob Mitchell (HMS Collingwood).

They were successful in both the matchplay and strokeplay events. The strokeplay was very close with one round to go but the second-seeded Royal Marines were not able to match an impressive surge from the Pompey players.

The matchplay went true to form with both Portsmouth and Royal Marines entering the final match on level points.

By virtue of a better win/loss ratio (goal difference!) the marines had to win the match while a halved affair would suffice for Portsmouth to retain the title. A halved match is indeed how it turned out and Pompey held on to the title.

The season so far has seen the ladies again performing well in their friendly matches registering wins against Hayling and Yeovilton Society (men!) and losing out to Southwick Park.

A number of ladies also competed in the Perranporth Open where they departed with numerous prizes.

There has been some improvement in the men's representative matches where, although losses have been recorded against opposition such as Cornwall, Leeds and District and the Civil Service, the margins of defeat have been significantly less than of late.

The men's results have in no small way been improved by the addition of five new players all new to the Service this year.

With one or two more events scheduled for both men and ladies between now and September, thoughts are turning towards the Inter Services at West Lancashire Golf Club where the ladies will be striving for an unprecedented third consecutive win, and the men looking to end a series of disappointing results.



Rapids progress

LT PAUL Bastiaens contends with the raging waters of the Breitach in the Alps at the 'business end' of the RN **Kayaking** Association's Exercise Bavarian Splash.

Eight members of the RNKA took advantage of the excellent facilities and experienced staff at the Naval Outdoor Centre, Germany (NOCG – known as Bavarian Surprise until revamped, rebranded and reopened in April 2009 by then Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Sir Alan Massey).

Lt Bastiaens organised the training session with the aim of giving developing paddlers a chance to really push themselves on challenging high-volume rivers which don't exist in the United Kingdom.

Assisted by the centre's senior instructors and river leaders Sgt Maj Paul Farr and Mark Waugh, the team managed to bag five different rivers in five days, carrying out white-water safety and rescue training.

Unfortunately the weather was unusually wet for the Alps at this time of year, which meant that some of the glacial-fed rivers were low due to lack of sun.

Fortunately, the rain-fed rivers were extremely high.

Taking part in such a trip in the past used to involve lots of organising as an official exped with approved instructors, funding, transport, accommodation and all the necessary paper work had to be sorted out well in advance.

At NOCG everything is already in place, with the added advantage of local knowledge.

The association, known more for its commitment to competitive canoeing, is seeking to branch out into the development of canoe sport as a whole within the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

The association recognises the importance of developing the paddler as a whole rather than just focusing on the competitive element of the sport and the fact that enjoyment of the sport should always be the priority.

Thanks to the success of the exercise kayakers hope to make this an annual training and development event.

For more information about the association and all forms of canoe sport in the RN, visit www.RNKA.co.uk.

Picture: PO(ACMN) Andrew Davies



Cole fired-up up for 100K

GREEN beret Cpl Brian Cole helped England hold on to one of **athletics'** most demanding endurance trophies.

After winning the 35-mile (57-kilometre) English selection race back in March, the NCO from Stoke Armed Forces Career Office headed to Boddington near Gloucester as the team captain for the UK AAA 100K National Championships.

The race is both an individual and a national team event with England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales all competing to win the team race and the Celtic Plate, which England has won for the past 14 years.

Brian takes up the story of his gruelling victory: "I was up at 5am for an easy two-mile jog before my breakfast of porridge and toast. By 8am, I was on the start line ready for what lay ahead.

"My plan was to run around six minutes 40 seconds per mile for the full 62 miles, the level I had trained at for the last 12 weeks.

"The race started with one athlete going off at a six-minute mile pace with me and two other athletes running at 6.30 per mile. The two athletes that were with me dropped off after 40 miles. I then had just one athlete to catch."

At the half-way point the commando was 11 minutes behind the leader – but in true RM spirit he was undeterred for he knew the pacesetter had started too quickly and would be unable to maintain such a tempo.

And so it proved.

"At 58 miles I was told by my support team that I was taking two minutes per mile out of him. I still had three miles to go and pushing myself through the pain barrier, ran to the finish to win by 90 seconds," said Brian.

"My finishing time of seven hours, seven minutes was one of the fastest times for 14 years, a course record and a personal best for me."

As well as helping England to victory, the triumph has lifted the Royal to top spot in UK rankings for long-distance running.

His time means he's qualified for the world championships in Gibraltar in November.

"Hopefully the route will *not* include the standard Rock Race route, well known to *Navy News* readers," Brian added.

Engineering a hockey triumph

DESPITE the annual **hockey** Inter-Specialisation tournament turning into a closely fought Inter-Branch event, the competition lost none of its edge as first the Royal Marines, then Warfare, then the Fleet Air Arm threatened to run away with it.

But when the sky blues, a formidable outfit lost to the Combined Purple and Green Engineers, everyone sat up and began to take notice, *writes Lt Cdr Alan Walker about his final tournament before leaving the Naval Service.*

Engineers? Looking like winning? – whatever next? The Engineers ended up unbeaten, winning two and drawing two – the latter against the FAA and RM.

The Fleet Air Arm were second, a point behind the Engineers but they were left to rue their result against the bottom team Warfare 2, who must have caught the WAFUs still in bed, metaphorically speaking.

There were some great stories: the greenie from HMS Enterprise who was allowed a crew change a couple of weeks early from his survey ship in Bahrain. The CO of HMS Portland who got his female seaman specialist to represent her branch from a very long way away indeed and the young man from HMS Quorn shipped ashore on the Isle of Man to catch a flight to Southampton.

There were the sad bits too: 42 replies (both 'yes' and 'no') from 800 personnel listed on 18 signals. Many ships just not bothering to even reply...

Many of those who turned up to play had been watch-on stop-on at sea for years; the last time we saw Tony Williams was as U23 'man of the tournament' as a S/Lt in 1996. Now he's a senior Lt Cdr PWO. Many others saw the event as their chance to "get back into" hockey.

We go with what we get on these occasions: 60 or 70 people gave up a day or more of their weekend to play in an RN tournament.

They all received commemorative medals, they all went away with a smile on their faces and the members of the top three teams all got prizes as well.

The winners, the Engineers (a mix of WE and ME, plus a Schoolie from way back), won the Delta Bravo Trophy: two glass balls in a goldfish bowl complete with a bush tucker trial star and suitable engraving! It will reside for six months in HMS Collingwood before transferring to Sultan in January.

A lot of work went into trying to get 32 specialisation teams – there were not many specialisations who were not represented.

Even the regulating branch had two representatives and LPT Regaina Cawley from Neptune kept the flag flying for the PT branch as the sole clubswinger present.

All-in-all a splendid grass-roots-level tournament with just enough senior players and umpires present to provide a knowledgeable lead for the 30-odd new players present.

By the laws of what's gone before, some of those players will be representing the Navy before very much longer. Amazing but true – and well worth the efforts.

A ridge too far

Continued from page 48

fatalities on the other side of the mountain during the period of our expedition."

Although the team did not summit, they do not believe they failed. "Given the weather conditions, no matter what we did there was no way we could have made the summit of Makalu," said Surg Lt Hornby.

"However, the real success was making the safe descent in the most hideous of conditions with the real risk of avalanche or cold injury."

Lt Cdr Hart added: "In the end we didn't conquer the mountain, but the mountain didn't defeat us. The weather was the only winner so in effect this was a no-score draw."

The team hope to return to the mountain in 2012 as they believe the challenge is achievable.

For further details and to see a picture gallery of photographs and video taken on the mountain visit www.makalu2010.com.

US take cup from Ark

ON A visit to Mayport HMS Ark Royal challenged the local Naval community to compete for **sailing's** Read Cup.

The trophy was presented by Capt S J Read in 1954 to encourage team races between the RN and USN.

Sailors from Jacksonville Naval Air Station accepted the challenge, hosting the race in their Flying Scot dinghies.

The two races were very closely contested with both sides lacking match racing experience.

The first race saw Cdr Rob Bellfield lead the fleet from the start to take line honours. Lt Cdr Toby Clay took fourth with LA(AH) Andy Cemm taking sixth.

One point down after the first race, Ark had all to play for in the second race.

After a thrilling duel between the lead RN boat and two American boats, Cdr Bellfield was pushed into second place. Lt Cdr Clay came in fifth and LA(SE) 'Normski' Whiteside sixth. The result meant that the Americans took the cup by six points.

Pulling power in Gibraltar

TWO-SIX, heave!

In the glaring Mediterranean sun, the **Combined British Forces Shield** contest moves (literally) towards its climax as the RN Divers take one more step (again, literally) towards victory.

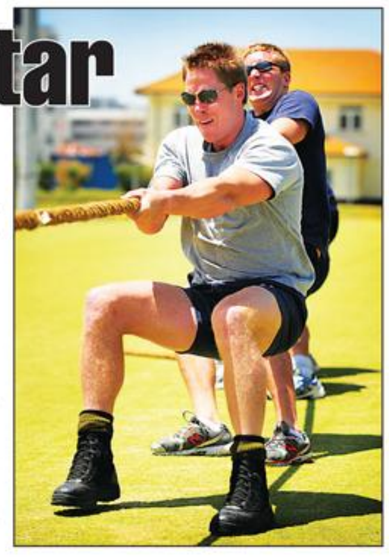
The shield is, explains LPT Daz Hoare (you might remember him from such ships as HMS Lancaster), "like flight deck sports onboard but with different Royal Navy departments taking on other teams like the Royal Gibraltar Regiment and the RAF."

Disciplines include six-a-side hockey and football, tag rugby, volleyball, tug-of-war (*pictured here by Cpl Ralph Merry*) and the impending decisive event, *It's A Knockout* in a swimming pool.

The Gib-based RN frogmen proved supreme at pulling, defeating their Army opponents 3-0 on the tug of war 'field'.

That helped the divers to a one-point lead over 642 Signal Troop, who in turn enjoyed a one-point advantage over the Gib Regiment.

Given his Senior Service credentials Daz is spurring on RN sporting activity on The Rock, including the 20-20 Royal Navy/Royal Marines cricket team, The Commanders, whose season has begun with a win, a defeat and a draw.





Up and Adam again

IT'S been a while since we featured **motorcyclist** PO(AET) Jamie Adam... so here he is (*pictured by EDP Photo News*).

The senior rate from HMS Sultan opened the 2010 season at Pembrey, the home of Welsh motorsport, where weather conditions were, says Jamie, "a lottery".

The track was still wet with a drying line and the biker gambled on intermediate tyres from ninth place on the grid. With it being a last-minute decision he didn't have time to warm them, so he slipped back a couple of places over the opening laps until the tyres warmed up.

When they did, Jamie got going and climbed through the field to take sixth position at the flag.

For the second day's racing – in glorious weather – he began in fifth place on the grid for the main event... which turned out to be "mayhem".

Jamie takes up the story: "We managed one lap before the race was red-flagged after an accident. We restarted after the marshals cleared the track. I got off to a flier and was second out of the first corner and was pushing the leader for two laps until the race was red-flagged again.

"I was furious – as you can imagine. The third restart went even better and I was first into the first corner and led the race for a couple laps.

"I got pushed wide at the first hairpin and two got past me. I stuck on their tails the whole race and finished third – only half a second behind the first-place rider – and got the fastest lap with a 1m 00.99s."

Jamie wasn't the only RN rider on the track.

LAET Colin Wilson (815 NAS) was contesting his first race meeting on his sv650 – having just got back from a seven-month tour with 211 Flight.

Colin had an up-and-down weekend with a couple of mechanical issues to deal with and a crash on the Saturay afternoon. He had a good day on Sunday after a full day on the bike and managed a 1m 7s lap.

Royal Marine Kieran Ryan was also competing with NG Road Racing, his first meeting on his newly-converted ZX6R so was a bit of a shake-down. Nevertheless he managed second place in his class with a lap of 1m 6s.

Fisticuffs for cadets

FOR the first time since the early 60s officer cadets of BRNC took to the ring for an inter-squadron charity **boxing** night.

"All the cadets were offered the chance to have a go at boxing this term," explained LPT Ian Rooney, "and it was great to have 20 step forward – none of them having boxed before.

"To be prepared to compete in front of your peers and seniors takes that extra level of guts."

Assisted by colleagues LPT Gareth Smith (who's boxed for the RN) and POPT Sweeney Todd, the clubz drew up a training programme and readied the quarterdeck for seven bouts.

"It was amazing – the nerves that built in the run up to the evening completely disappeared as you zoned in to what you had to do on getting into the ring," said S/Lt James Carpenter, who was stopped in his special light heavyweight bout.

"I know there was a lot of cheering but I didn't hear anything!"

More than £2,500 was raised for RNRM Charity courtesy of various auctions from the chance to be commodore for the day to enjoying a cream tea on the parade ground during divisions.

24-hour power trip

CYCLISTS from the RN/RMCA were among the 2,500 riders who took part in this year's Original Source Mountain Mayhem, a 24-hour mountain bike endurance event.

Now in its 15th year and based at Eastnor Deer Park, near Ledbury, the race attracts riders at all levels, from full-on supported race teams and solo riders to 'have-a-go weekend warriors' in teams of ten

Pat Adams, the event organiser, had made good use of the parkland to craft a 9.3-mile lap that had a generous 1,300ft of climbing in it.

With Royal being 'a bit busy' right now, the RN/RMCA entry this year comprised a mixture of dark blue and associate members; with teams entered in the sports male and sports mixed categories as well as the all-encompassing Inter-Service category, and half the squad never having ridden an endurance event before, this year was going to be a 'development year'.

Excellent weather in the lead up to the event meant that the trails were dry, dusty and fast with the exception of a new set of single track which seemed to have been fashioned out of plasticine; over the 24 hours it became a power-sapping treacly slog full of breaking bumps and ruts.

As always the race began with a run before riders picked up their bikes and attacked the course. Both RN teams got off to a good start with the lead riders completing their opening laps within minutes of each other; as the afternoon progressed and riders changed over both RN teams remained in the lower half of the top ten.

All around the course there were groups of children offering 'high-fives' to passing riders and spectators and riders offering shouts of encouragement to the accompanying sound of cow bells; we were just lucky the Vuvuzela had yet to make it to Herefordshire.

As dusk gave way to darkness and the kids and cows went to bed, the temperature dropped considerably but RN A managed to maintain their pace and position in the Inter-Service category; RN B lost a bit of time and dropped out of the top ten.

As dawn broke the kids got up and the cows were joined by a guitarist on one of the climbs.

With the sun creeping into a cloudless sky the temperature rose, warming the riders and, like geckos basking on hot rocks, both teams picked up the pace again.



● *Power source... PO Rob Smith (HMS Vivid) negotiates part of the 9.3-mile Mountain Mayhem course* Picture: Sinead Mclaren

RN A started to chase down Army Cycling C, who were ten minutes ahead and RN B tried to regain some of the pace lost overnight.

With signs of fatigue beginning to show the finish couldn't come quickly enough, but there was just sufficient time for most riders to get one more daylight lap in and take away fresh memories of nailing sweeping flowing single track and climbs conquered.

Having to cross the line after the 2pm finish time or the ride didn't count, meant that towards the end of the race there was a lot of lurking; once the hooter sounded there was a steady stream of riders coming over the hill and into the finish to collect their finisher's medal and receive the traditional handshake from Pat Adams.

RN A were placed fifth out of 22 Service teams (and 32nd out of 205 all-male teams), while the B team were the 13th Service side (and 45th of the 112 mixed teams taking part).

Elsewhere on two wheels, RN/RM mountain bikers made for South Wales and Round 3 of the British Series.

Usually renowned for being unbearably hot, it was the first time in eight years that Margam Park hosted a wet, cold race, with visibility on the top of the hill reduced to 20 metres in places.

From the traditional tarmac start, the tough course weaved its way up and down the South Wales' hillside, before a couple of river crossings and a long climb, finally descending two kilometres back to the start.

The seven-kilometre course would usually take approximately 22 minutes, but as the day progressed – and the track turned into a mudbath due to hundreds of racers – lap times were down to between 30 and 40 minutes.

Associate member Scot Easter put in another superb performance in the experts' race to claim a well-deserved fifth place, and Andy Plewes was also back on form to take seventh in the veterans' race.

Al Lovell returned to the masters' race having missed the previous round due to his bike being repaired.

He showed seriously-impressive form but on the third lap another racer's pedal punctured the sidewall of his front tyre. Unfortunately Al had lost his repair kit during the race, so had to pull out after two laps.

Steve McCulley, Rob Smith and Shane Lawton battled on, although Shane also had to pull out on the third lap. Eventually Steve managed to hang in for 28th place with Rob in 33rd.

Meanwhile, the National 25-mile Time Trial Championship was held in Yorkshire. The 'blue ribbon event' was won by multi British Time Trial Champion Dr Michael Hutchinson in 49m 43s.

The RNRMCA's sole representative on the day was CPO Andy Phipps who rode extremely well to record a time inside the hour – the benchmark time for this event.

The 2010 RNRMCA 50-mile Time Trial Championship was hosted by Camel Valley Cycling and Triathlon Club near Victoria, Cornwall – near Bodmin Moor.

Weather conditions again proved to be the determining factor and although dry it was a windy day which ensured personal bests (PBs) were extremely hard to come by. WO1 Garry Drew (HMS Raleigh) was the only RNRMCA rider to PB on the day.

The honours, once again, this year went to club captain and stalwart CPO(PT) Sean Childs (HMS Raleigh) 1h 48m 18s; WO1 Drew posted second place on 1h 51m 17s, 41 seconds ahead of third place rider, the RAF's Mike Westwell.

And so on to HMS Raleigh and the RNRMCA 16-mile Sports Time Trial. After taking a year out from competitive cycling to recover from glandular fever, Pete Vincent (Mid-Devon CC) put in a sterling performance over the undulating and testing course.

In the process he set a new course record, shaving 30 seconds off the existing time.

Looking lean and fit, the North-Devon-based 22-year-old was 38 seconds ahead of CPO Childs on his home course. A further 45 seconds back was 1st Category Roadman James Smith (ProBikeKit.com), who is also based at Raleigh and known for putting in some good times against the clock.

Yachts' global reach ends

AFTER just short of 12 months away, the Royal Navy 67ft Challenge yacht Adventure leads her Army and RAF counterparts (Challenger and Discoverer respectively) up the Solent towards Gosport, bringing **Exercise Transglobe** to a close.

The round-the-world sailing event – the first by the Forces in 11 years – began in July 2009 with the aim of giving Service personnel the adventure of a lifetime (and leadership skills and grit to boot) and, on one of the 13 legs, helping men and women in the Forces injured in the line of duty get back to full fitness.

The three yachts were crewed by 14 people at a time – a mix of experienced and rookie sailors on most legs.

On two sections – the 2009 Sydney to Hobart race and the 2010 Antigua Race Week – selected crews took charge to represent their Services, pitting themselves against each other and the cream of the world's professional race teams.

"In total, more than 500 Service people have experienced the demands of tough ocean sailing, many of them never having set foot on a yacht before," said Capt Nick Fletcher, Deputy Director for Naval Personnel.

"One section of the expedition was crewed entirely by people who were recovering from severe wounds incurred on operations together with their support staff from the medical services.

"Experience shows that demanding adventurous training helps to prepare people for the stresses and challenges of life in operational theatres."

Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins, FRPU East



Coarse for good

THIS year's RN **coarse fishing** championships were split over two lakes and two days.

The contest opened at Boddingtons Reservoir near Daventry with 35 anglers – a nice even mix of 18 RN personnel and 17 associate members, *writes WO1 Hughie Welsh*.

Match day was a sunny day with a nice breeze, conditions perfect. Pegs 66-101 – the favoured pegs – were fished during the six-hour match.

This contest was hard but POMEM(L) John Harvey (HMS Liverpool) proved he had mastered the water by breaking the RN record with a brilliant 170lb 8oz to win the first day.

Trev Conroy (Fleet Air Arm Firsts) was second with 85lb 1oz and third place was taken by Marco Middleton (The Leftovers) with 70lb 4OZ.

Sections A and B fishing was difficult, to say the least; section C and D could also have fished much better as well.

A section winners were: Robbie Roberts 33lb 5oz; B section: Terry Oakley 29lb 12oz (both Exiles); C section: Trev Conroy; and D Section: John Harvey.

In the team event, after day one the Exiles were leading on 27pts, two points ahead of Fleet Air Arm Firsts.

The deciding day saw competitors move across the border into Oxfordshire and Clattercote Reservoir, near Banbury.

Thirty-three anglers began the match – two fewer than day one as they returned home, one because of work commitments, the other because of illness.

Clattercote was fishing nails, as is usually the case when a large amount of pressure is put on the water.

The beautiful weather was the only positive of the day, with the exception of a few weights.

PO Harvey was the star of the show again with a perfect record, winning day two with a weight of 37lb 6oz to add to his outstanding victory at Boddingtons.

John's weight mainly comprised a 15lb carp which somehow he managed to get from under the platform and a smaller carp of 6lb.

Ged Power (Exiles) was runner up with 22lb. Kev Lund (Dip it and see!) was third with 19lb 4oz.

In the team event, the Exiles – Terry Oakey, Michael Power, Ged Power and Robbie Roberts – won the overall contest with a total score of 51pts, three points ahead of their nearest rivals, Hansford Ex-RN Lags. Fleet Air Arm Firsts finished third on 46pts.

Feedback received for this years champs has been positive with a good turnout, so well done.

Next year Hallcroft fishery near Retford has been booked for the championships over the weekend of June 11 and 12.

Next month



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SPORT



● *The team struggle up the ridge of Makalu as it's lashed by the jet stream*

A ridge too far

TWO sailors and a Royal Marine made a valiant attempt to become the first mountaineers to reach one of the world's highest peaks by a notorious unclimbed route.

Lt Cdr Paul 'Tigger' Hart (HMS Raleigh/BRNC), Surg Lt Simon Hornby (CLR) and C/Sgt Steve Jones (CTCRM) were part of an eight-strong Forces expedition which spent three months trying to reach the 28,000ft peak of Makalu by the South-East Ridge.

The route is accepted as one of the greatest remaining challenges in the Himalayas, equalling in difficulty routes on K2 – generally regarded as the most difficult mountaineering challenge in the world.

The majority of Makalu's 10km South-East Ridge is knife-edged, with immense drops into Tibet and Nepal on either side.

As such it is fully exposed to the effects of the prevailing weather and especially the jet stream which lies over the Everest-Makalu region.

As well as the obvious dangers of the weather, the route has many other hidden dangers. Some of the route can involve travelling across overhanging corniced snow, where there is the ever-present danger of the snow collapsing.

The alternative is bullet-hard blue ice which is almost impossible to gain any purchase on.

After reaching base camp – located at an altitude higher than the summit of Mont Blanc – the team set about establishing a series of camps along the ridge.

In so doing, the climbers had to contend with some very demanding conditions: strong winds (regularly in excess of 80mph) and extremely cold temperatures (regularly below -20°C), continually hindered efforts to move up the mountain.

The advance base camp was sited on a hanging glacier which (worryingly) was inexorably moving down the mountain, albeit at what should have been quite a slow pace.



● *The 24,000ft stare... The team shelters from the elements in an ice cave on Makalu*

"There is nothing like lying in a sleeping bag at night with your head only inches above ice that is cracking and groaning the whole night through," said Lt Cdr Hart.

The route up from ABC to Camp 1 was highly-dangerous with constant rock-fall.

One area in particular, known as 'Bomb Alley', presented serious risk due to the way rocks were constantly breaking off high up the mountain and were funnelled down between two ribs of rock.

There was no alternative to crossing this chute and it was a matter of preparing mentally to go and then getting on with it.

Due to the altitude, limited acclimatisation, the width of the chute and the steepness of the ground, it was impossible to simply dash across the gap.

From Camp 1 onwards, the route became ever more hostile along the impossibly-narrow and steep ridgeline.

The team were either walking on the top of the ridge – in places no more than 12in wide – or they were forced to toe-point in their crampons along its side.

Toe-pointing across bullet-hard ice when there is a several thousand foot drop beneath you tends to concentrate the mind and the team were commonly pushing the boundaries of high-altitude mountaineering, particularly when they were exposed to the effects of the freezing winds.

It was on the open ridge line that the weather started to really hinder the team.

The maximum safe wind level for the team to work was about 45kts, anything above this level buffeted the climbers so much that they started to expend too much energy just trying to steady themselves as they moved.

There was also the constant danger of an unexpected turn in the weather and on two occasions team members were trapped on the ridge by unpredicted storms.

During one storm, Lt Cdr Hart and his climbing partner, Spr Ben Sherwood, were trapped for three nights on the ridge in freezing winds and the constant danger of frostbite or being blown into Tibet.

Despite such close shaves the team made steady, if slow, progress along the ridge and set up further camps towards Makalu's summit.

While the climbers were moving up the ridge, they were asked to come to the aid of an American team, one of whom was showing signs of pulmonary embolism.

The American team were at an altitude of 7,200m and off the side of the South-East Ridge, but because of snowfall and the danger of avalanche they couldn't descend the route they had come up.

The Brits went to the aid of the American climbers and successfully helped them to descend the British route

The climber with pulmonary embolism was airlifted to Kathmandu for treatment. His partner, Marty Schmidt – one of the top guides in the world and a successful summit climber of several 8,000m peaks including K2 – stated that the descent along the South-East Ridge was one of the most awe-inspiring and difficult things he had ever done and was equal to anything he had faced on K2.

The team finally got into a position to go for the summit – much later than they had originally intended.

The weather in the whole region had been particularly poor and somewhat atypical for a normal climbing season.

There was an anticipated good weather window, but unfortunately it never arrived.

Instead there was a completely unpredicted half-metre dump of snow on the mountain.

From this point on the snow continued unabated and the team found themselves in the position of having to make a highly-dangerous and extremely difficult evacuation of the mountain.

Fortunately, and against the odds, all the team managed to descend to safety without any life-threatening injury.

"In the end, the conditions were so bad that just getting down became the real challenge and that we did so safely was as much of a success as getting to the top," said Lt Cdr Hart.

"The conditions were the worst I have experienced in 30 years of mountaineering.

"It came as no surprise to find out that there had been

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Exceedingly good golf from Alex

THERE'S a new name on the RN **golf** roll of honour following the 2010 Championships played at Hindhead, *writes Cdr Gary Skinns*.

AB Alex Kippen (*pictured above*) joined the Navy at the beginning of the year with an excellent golfing resumé, having been a regular Somerset county player.

Following a couple of representative matches for the RN, he duly went on to win the individual title over a demanding course in some blistering-hot conditions.

For the second time the event included the ladies and their participation appears to have been a popular move although the hope is that numbers will increase in this category in future years.

Scoring was disappointing overall, but the championships opened with a number of players in the hunt initially.

Round 1 saw excellent play at the top of the order with Kippen (HMS Raleigh) setting the pace with a creditable level par 70.

His nearest challenger was CPOMEA Lee McCathie (HMS Blyth) with 74 while a number of players in the high seventies were still within sight.

One name missing from the leaderboard at this stage was six time winner and reigning Champion PONN Scott Gilbert (Fleet CNR Ops) who opened with 82 but his week was set to improve as it progressed.

The second round saw Kippen slip to a 77 allowing McCathie to leapfrog him with an excellent 71.

LAET Craig Merralls (829 NAS) followed his first round 78 with a much-improved 73 to move into third while Gilbert shot ten strokes better than the first round to lie fourth.

With all the leaders scoring in the mid-70s in round three, the cut was made and the stage set for the final round with McCathie ahead of Kippen by one shot.

Merralls and Gilbert were some ten shots plus off the lead and seemingly out of contention.

Gilbert, however had different ideas and mounted a final round charge. His one-under-par 69 proved to be the best of the week lifting him into third place and finishing just three behind the winner.

The two leaders matched each other stroke for stroke over the first nine holes of the final round.

Sadly McCathie was to record a bogey and two double bogeys in quick succession at

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